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In Prospect

As the curtain drops on Rudy Giuliani's mayoralty, we can't resist leaping to our feet in applause and calling "Bravo" for perhaps city hall's best performance ever—greater even than Fiorello LaGuardia's. The measure of his success is the difference between the New York he inherited, which the newsweeklies had written off as "ungovernable" and "dying," and the Gotham that became the world's most vibrant city, the capital of the twentieth century. We are enormously proud to have been considered, as the *New York Post* generously put it, "the place where Rudy gets his ideas."

Giuliani's biggest idea was that human affairs are not governed by vast, impersonal forces but by individual decisions. New York was *of course* governable—provided you had the will and vision to do the governing. You couldn't shrug, turn your palms upward, and appeal to some abstraction over which you had no control—the nation's irresistible suburbanization, say, or the Internet's inevitable dissolution of the cities—to absolve yourself for failure. Assuming, as Giuliani assumed, that talented, entrepreneurial people would always like to live near one another for the electricity such closeness generates, he took responsibility for creating the conditions in which that could keep happening in the place proverbially paved with gold. And he succeeded.

That demonstration engendered a change in New York's political culture, whose core belief had long been that vast forces are paramount, and in the face of them individual decisions—and therefore individual responsibility—are as nothing. If one man could turn the *whole city* around 180 degrees, by force of will, then maybe individual decisions *do* count. And not just for mayors: by this logic, perhaps criminals were personally responsible for their acts, too, rather than pitiable victims of their environment, driven to evildoing by the "root causes" of poverty and racism—a revolutionary idea in Gotham.

A tough, street-smart prosecutor, Giuliani took office knowing that crime, above all else, was killing the city, having driven 1 million residents, along with thousands of businesses, out of town, sick and tired of the fear and squalor. He knew that to cut crime he didn't have to end the "root causes"; he simply had to police differently. He reorganized the NYPD, reorienting its mission from solving crime to preventing crime from happening in the first place. He ordered cops to clean up the public disorder that, by convincing wrongdoers that no one was in charge, fostered more serious crime. He instituted an activist policing that stopped and searched suspicious-looking people for guns and drugs, that broke up drug and car-theft rings, and that disrupted the criminal infrastructure of fences and chop shops.

Murder fell by 70 percent on his watch, overall violent crime by more then half—the greatest urban-policy success in living memory. With customers willing to go out on the streets and travelers flocking in, business flourished, as if a great tax had suddenly been lifted—as indeed it had. Poor minority neighborhoods, where crime dropped most dramatically, benefited most of all; there, incomes and property values rose most steeply, once the new policing had restored the first of all civil rights, on which the rest depend: the right to be safe in your home and on the streets.

The message of personal responsibility undergirded all Giuliani's other successes. He cut the welfare rolls from 1.2 million—one New Yorker in seven—to 469,000, revolutionizing what had once been the U.S. welfare capital with the message that able-bodied citizens should not expect their neighbors to support them indefinitely, when they can get a job and take responsibility for themselves and their families. Here in the nation's opportunity city, they are not victims of racism or economic injustice. He cut taxes early on, and kept them from rising thereafter, understanding that to attract wealth-creators, the opportunity city needs to let them profit from their success. The city added 430,000 new jobs during his mayoralty—Gotham's greatest job growth ever.

Giuliani himself is the strongest possible argument for his view that history is made not by ineluctable forces but by men, sometimes even great men. To play the currently fashionable game of "what if" history: suppose for a moment that the planes had hit the towers in 1991 instead of 2001, and that Giuliani's opponent had been elected mayor in 1993. Can anyone say for sure that today the World Trade Center site might not be a rubbish-strewn tangle of ailanthus trees in a city of 6 million? Thanks to Giuliani's accomplishments, and his luminous civic courage that heartened a city in crisis, we can face the future with resolute confidence.

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oundings

Policing *Does* Matter

New research refutes the "root-causes" theory of crime.

After September 11, as New York's Finest turned some of their attention away from ordinary policing and focused on preventing another terrorist strike, violent crime spiked up in some areas of the city. The spike suggested how activist policing really *does* cut crime: if you stop doing it, this is what happens. The experience served as a reminder that Gotham's amazing crime turnaround during the 1990s, with murder falling 70 percent and violent crimes in general down by more than half, rested on the innovations of Giuliani-era policing—and above all on the "broken-windows" strategy of policing such "quality of life" offenses as aggressive panhandling and public urination, on the assumption that tolerating such disorder gives wrongdoers the impression that no one is in charge and encourages more serious offenses.

PHOTOFEST

Most academic criminologists, however, don't buy the idea that changes in policing can change the crime rate. They believe that "root causes" or vast impersonal forces—not policy choices—explain changes in the crime rate. According to these academics, crime declined in the nineties because the crack epidemic burned itself out; the economy boomed, so poor people weren't forced into a life of crime; and there were fewer testosterone-charged, crime-prone young males around. And if policing *did* contribute a little to lowering crime, in the ivory-tower view, the costs were excessive, as activist cops spread a reign of terror in poor minority neighborhoods.

To test these views, in 1999, under the auspices of the Manhattan Institute, we decided to collect and analyze data to see what really did cause crime to fall so dramatically in the city. We collected precinct-level data on violent crime and misdemeanors, and data on some of the "vast forces" criminologists credit with the crime drop: drug-use patterns, school enrollment, unemployment. Then we examined the relationships.

The results strongly indicated that broken-windows policing does matter in cutting crime—a lot. None of the other leading explanations seems plausible. Broken-windows policing significantly and strongly associates with sharp reductions in violent crime; in fact, we estimate that it prevented at least 60,000 violent crimes in New York between 1989 and 1998. By contrast, changes in the number of high school–age males bore no significant association with changes in the amount of violent crime. Nor did shifts in drug use. As for the economy, changes in unemployment levels *did* relate weakly to reduced violent crime—but in exactly the opposite way than criminologists had theorized. Over the ten-year period of our analysis, violent crime actually *dipped* as unemployment worsened. Our findings leave all the conventional explanations with little to support them.

In addition, we did what criminologists usually don't do: we went and looked for ourselves, firsthand, spending time at six precincts. We sat in on strategy meetings, interviewed officers, and observed them as they went about their work. Contrary to the critics' charge that the NYPD is a mindless, oppressive force, what we discovered is that officers who enforced broken-windows laws routinely evaluated the actual situation at hand and the potential consequences of their actions. While arresting a minor offender was always an option, for example, police used discretion and often warned the offender verbally instead.

Precinct leaders, we also learned from our up-close observations, regularly used the now-famous Compstat system of computerized crime tracking and establishing accountability—another Giuliani-Bratton innovation—to identify potential crime problems and come up with smart ways to deal with them before they materialized. Though we don't have data that prove Compstat has helped slash New York's crime rate, everything that we saw suggests that it has. We noted that commanders successfully called their shots: when Compstat focused their attention on fighting a given category of crime, that kind of crime usually decreased.

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Soundings

No matter what happens in the future to the "root causes" and "vast forces," there's no reason to fear that the NYPD, if it builds on its current strengths, will be unable to keep crime under control.
—*George L. Kelling and William H. Sousa*

Fox Has *Morals?*

Viewers know that fairness doesn't mean equivalence between good and evil.

Since September 11, the Fox News Channel has been steadily drawing more viewers than its main rival, CNN, even though it has fewer local TV affiliates. The *New York Times* finds this highly disturbing. How, it wondered in a December article, could a conservative all-news network outdraw a liberal one? There had to be a hidden secret, underhanded or malign. The code breakers' shocked discovery expressed itself in the article's headline: FOX PORTRAYS A WAR OF GOOD AND EVIL.

Fox anchors, said the *Times*, had the bad taste to call Usama bin Ladin "a monster," who oversees a "web of hate," and they characterized al-Qaida followers as "terror goons" and Taliban fighters as "diabolical." This manner of reportage, the story sourly observed, "reminds some rivals and press critics of the war drumbeat of the old Hearst papers and the ideologically driven British tabloids"—in other words, it appealed to viewers' base, irrational, and of course right-wing impulses. Evidently, at 229 West 43rd Street, all views, no matter how vile, deserve calm equal treatment (except for the ideas of right-wingers, of course).

To bolster its case against Fox, the *Times* rang up David Westin, president of ABC News, who had this to say about his own network's coverage of the War on Terrorism: "The American people right now need at least some sources of their news where they believe we're trying to get it right, plain and simply, rather than because it fits with any advocacy we have." The paper neglected to remind readers that Westin's supposed cool objectivity got him into hot water a few weeks earlier. Asked whether the Pentagon had been a legitimate military target for the September 11 terrorists, Westin had replied: "As a journalist, I feel strongly that's something I should not be taking an opinion on." A firestorm followed his remark, forcing Westin to apologize.

Westin, like the *Times* and other news sources that have embraced this General Theory of Journalistic Relativity, should know better. Responsible news organizations owe their readers and viewers accuracy about military casualties and homeland dangers, not moral equivalency between terrorists and law-abiding democrats. Those Islamist murderers, even now, are seeking the tools of biological, chemical, and atomic warfare. If that's not the activity of monsters and their diabolical henchmen, nothing is. To describe them as if they weren't evil distorts reality rather than captures it truthfully. Americans understand this. That's why they're voting for Fox with their remotes night after night.
—*Stefan Kanfer*

Keep On Doin' It

A new report from sex-ed "experts" makes all the old mistakes.

Here's the bad news: American teenagers are more likely to have sex at an earlier age and to have more partners than kids in other Western countries, and they have higher rates of pregnancy, childbearing, and abortion. In fact, the U.S. teen birthrate is *five* times that of France or Sweden. But the good news is that, high as this number is, it is better than it was. During the past decade, teen births declined 20 percent, all but reversing a 24 percent jump between 1986 and 1991. Meanwhile, Western European teen birthrates held steady.

What should we do?

According to a new report infelicitously called "Can More Progress Be Made?" and published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a well-known research and advocacy organization that focuses on reproductive matters, Americans need to offer more "societal acceptance of sexual activity of young people," more sex ed, and "easy access to contraceptives and other reproductive health services." This is the same advice the organization has been offering since its founding back in the Age of Aquarius.

But consider the two explanations most observers give for the drop in U.S. teen pregnancy. First, fewer teenagers are having sex, because of a growing cultural consensus in America that says teens are better off delaying going all the way—exactly contrary to Guttmacher's "societal acceptance" of teen sex

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attitude. Public policy, especially abstinence education, has reinforced that new consensus.

The second reason most researchers give is that those teens who still do have sex—even after their abstinence-education classes—are using birth control more reliably, perhaps in part because they have gotten the condom message in their sex-ed classes, and in part because welfare reform has sent the message that having babies on the public dime is no longer okay. But in any case, sexually active teens are already doing what the Guttmacher Institute thinks it will take lots more sex ed and condom giveaways to teach them to do. No wonder the institute's report soft-pedals the good news about the falling birthrate.

Here is one more group of "experts" whose message can only make things worse.

—Kay S. Hymowitz

BROWN BROTHERS

Pataki Blows It Again

The governor's post–September 11 performance has left national Republicans groaning.

With an approval rating rocketing above 80 percent after September 11, New York governor George Pataki seemed well placed not only to win reelection this fall but also to repair his badly dented reputation in the national Republican Party. Once considered a possible running mate for George W. Bush, Pataki had made himself radioactive to the national party by embracing bad policies intended to buy him political support on New York's Left, the worst being a deal cut in 2000 with health-care union boss Dennis Rivera that dramatically swelled New York's already engorged Medicaid costs. But in the days following the terrorist attack, as his popularity soared, all seemed forgiven: President Bush invited him to attend his historic presidential address to the joint session of Congress; there was even talk of a big federal appointment.

True to form, however, Pataki soon squandered the goodwill he briefly won. The first sour note came in October, when the governor dumped a whopping $54 billion post–September 11 aid request on the Bush administration, including pleas for funds to build a high-speed rail between Gotham and upstate, and billions to replace local tax revenues that might dry up because of the terror attack. Just days before making this brazen request—with post–September 11 realities clearly before him—Pataki had approved a new state budget that actually raised spending, in a damn-the-torpedoes-full-speed-ahead spirit.

After the aid plea met with incredulity in Washington, Pataki tried a different tack: he lobbied for hundreds of millions of federal dollars to support the state's Medicaid program, claiming that September 11 caused an economic slump that has strained every state's Medicaid budget, New York's included, so federal help is crucial. But of course, New York's Medicaid program is hurting more than those of other states because, already by far the most lavish and wasteful in the nation, it became even more so after the governor's 2000 deal with union boss Rivera. A properly skeptical Washington is unlikely to sign on.

Pataki's over-the-top aid requests have embarrassed President Bush. By putting the president in the politically awkward position of rejecting New York's petitions, Pataki has opened him up to sniping from the *New York Times* and other liberal press critics, who charge that he's not doing enough to help New Yorkers after September 11.

Yet, even as the aid debate raged, Pataki further alienated national Republicans by announcing at an AFL-CIO convention that he'd be the first U.S. governor to sign an anti-business bill legalizing "card check" union registration, making it much easier for labor to organize workers at workplaces not covered by federal labor law, such as small businesses and church-run hospitals and schools. Thanks to the new law, a union rep can now just hand around a dues-deduction card to non-unionized workers in such workplaces; if a simple majority signs the card, the union is in, without having to go through the long and often nasty balloting process that unionization usually requires. Pataki's bill will drive up the already astronomical cost of doing

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Soundings

business in New York and put pressure on other governors to follow his lead. Pataki's incessant quest for union votes has confirmed to many prominent Republicans that he lacks an ideological compass.

It has been a remarkably inept performance, sure to sink any aspirations Pataki may have had for a major role in the national party. All for a few votes from the Left that, given the governor's current popularity, probably will prove superfluous come November. —*Steven Malanga*

Racism Forever

A recent conference on black Americans descends into farce.

After September 11, a few black pundits drew analogies between law enforcement's new focus on Muslims and the supposed racial profiling of blacks, and Harvard's Cornel West got in the fall's most outrageous line—that the attack represented the "niggerization of America," giving all Americans a taste of victimhood. But that's about all we had to endure from the Racism Forever posse. The Al Sharptons of the world thankfully receded into the background. But only until November, when they officially reclaimed the spotlight during 2001's "The State of Black America" conference, held in Atlanta.

Saturday Night Live's writers would have a hard time outdoing the foolishness on display during the four-day event. Since to be black apparently is to be always under siege, Jesse Jackson described the investigation of criminally suspicious Arabs as the threat-of-the-month for blacks. "Tonight, Ashcroft and the CIA and the FBI and Homeland Security and the IRS can work together—so look out," Jackson thundered. Atlanta mayor Bill Campbell cautioned: "While the rest of the country waves the flag of Americana, we understand we are not part of that." And then there was dependable Reverend Al, hollering: "We don't owe America anything; America owes us." This one got a big hand, with some in the audience waving Black Power flags. How a demand for handouts represents power, nobody seemed to ask.

For all the heated rhetoric, however, the conference was a flop. Jackson ludicrously suggested that Maxine Waters would become "the Number One congressional leader," but she didn't bother to show up. Nor did other top-shelf invitees, such as Shirley Franklin and Danny Glover. Attendance generally hovered below 300 people, and many of them only came to see television celebrity Tavis Smiley.

In truth, this wasn't a conference at all but vaudeville, designed to remind its audience that raging at white "hegemony" is the very soul of being "authentically black." The pathetically low turnout, though, shows that blacks have grown tired of the show. Since September 11, millions of American blacks have hung American flags, not Black Power ones, on their car antennas. In Atlanta, where Campbell will soon step aside for a black female mayor—and during the same week that a black man became CEO of AOL-Time Warner—Jackson, Sharpton, and their ilk struck old battle postures, mistaking theater for real uplift. In the real "State of Black America," the rest of us are moving on. —*John H. McWhorter*

The Council Flunks Econ 101

Everybody else knows you need tax cuts during a recession.

In Washington, Democrats and Republicans disagree on how best to jolt the economy out of its current recession, but they agree in principle on the need to cut taxes. It's Economics 101: if you slash business and personal taxes during an economic contraction, you ease the pressure on firms to cut costs by laying off workers and reducing investment, and you leave taxpayers more disposable income, which they can pour into investment or consumption, giving the economy a lift.

Did New York City politicians ever take Econ 101? In recession-hit Gotham, City Council members have been squabbling over the budget, but the "conservatives" want taxes to stay where they are, while the "liberals" want to hike them. No one is suggesting the tax cuts that even *congressmen* know are crucial. But maybe the council members *do* know that they're defying the laws of economics and just don't care. They know they represent not all New Yorkers but only those who elected them: government workers, government-supported social services workers, and welfare recipients. The council members want to lessen the recession's effects on these dependents on the public purse; and if that means supporting policies that drain vitality from

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the city's private economy and limit opportunity for the majority of citizens, fine. —*William J. Stern*

Why We Need Military Tribunals

A bin Ladin dream-team defense, it don't make sense.

President Bush's suggestion that the U.S. might use military tribunals in the War on Terror to try members of al-Qaida has met with hostility from civil libertarians on both the Right and Left. "Anyone charged with being involved in the attacks, including Osama bin Laden, should stand trial in an ordinary American court," the *New York Times* editorialized, for only there would the government "prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt before an independent jury, while affording the defendants the right to appeal and to all other procedural safeguards included in the notion of due process."

This is, to put it bluntly, nuts. The idea of civilian U.S. trials for terrorists caught in combat overseas is *really* nuts. Say that our soldiers did nab bin Ladin and Mullah Omar in Afghanistan and dutifully sent them back to America for trial. If the civil libertarians had their way, the questions would pile up fast. Did the soldiers capture the terror capos without reading them their Miranda rights? Did the U.S. military have probable cause to seize the now-infamous videotape that proves bin Ladin's complicity in the September 11 attacks? Should our special forces have chased down a warrant before searching Omar's compound? How about a Johnnie Cochrane defense for bin Ladin? Simply to ask these questions is to show that military tribunals are essential.

If military tribunals for terrorists we catch overseas are a no-brainer, there's a good case to make that we should use them to try al-Qaida members we catch on our shores too. The al-Qaida network, after all, has declared a *jihad* against the U.S. and has committed an act of war on our soil, so we should view the actions of their agents in America as those of enemy soldiers out of uniform. Military tribunals for spies and saboteurs are nothing special.

We've already seen the workings of the civilian courts in bringing al-Qaida members to justice. The terrorists prosecuted for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing went through the civilian justice system. The date sentencing was originally to have taken place: September 11, 2001. —*Peter Reinharz*

The New York Democrats' *Real* Problem

As they stampede leftward, they can't do without Sharpton.

No matter what he says or does, racial arsonist Al Sharpton remains a big player in New York politics. During the recent mayoral race, Sharpton—who wasn't even running—received more media attention than any of the Democratic candidates, and way more than the eventual winner, Republican Michael Bloomberg. What accounts for his staying power?

To say that New York's top Democratic politicians suck up to him, granting him legitimacy, is only to move the question back a notch, of course. After all, why do leading New York Democrats, including U.S. senator Chuck Schumer and state attorney general Eliot Spitzer, continue to seek Sharpton's approval? Why does Sharpton's support go beyond New York to the highest reaches of the national Democratic Party? After all, DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe recently proclaimed that anyone who criticized the reverend wasn't welcome in the party—the party Bill Clinton restored to electability by expelling rapper Sister Souljah from its ranks.

Democrats, both in New York and nationally, embrace Sharpton because they can no longer win elections without a super-majority among black voters. In the 2000 presidential race, Al Gore ran even with George W. Bush only because he got 95 percent of the black vote. Mark Green, the Democratic standard-bearer in November's New York mayoral race, won more than 70 percent of black votes—a huge majority in the historical context of American elections—but it wasn't enough. This need for an ultra-super-majority makes Democrats loath to criticize any black, no matter how extreme his views, for fear of losing even a handful of black votes.

How did the Democrats get into this mess? Look at New York's recent Democratic mayoral primary and you'll find the answer. At times, the four candidates seemed to be running for mayor of New York's unionized government workers instead of all New Yorkers. On other occasions, they seemed to want to be mayor of all those citizens who receive

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transfer payments from government instead of those who work for a living. All four seemed indifferent—at best—in their commitment to fighting crime. If you were a middle-income person who worked in Gotham's private sector and found the city's taxes burdensome and believed in law and order, the Democratic candidates not only had nothing to say to you—they didn't even seem to care if you existed. Only special interests counted.

As a result, two key Democratic constituencies—white Catholics and Jews, who tend overwhelmingly to fit this middle-income profile—have now voted Republican in four straight mayoral elections. And as Catholics and Jews drift away from the Democrats, the party has been willing to pander ever more to Sharpton, disturbing Catholic and Jewish voters even more. It's a vicious circle for the Democrats. New York's politics would be a lot healthier if the party did a little soul-searching and tried to escape it. *—William J. Stern*

'Ang 'em

Criminals have no illusions about how to fight crime.

In England, a man named Paul Whiting has just received a sentence of life imprisonment for the abduction, sexual assault, and brutal murder of a little girl. It emerged after his trial that prison officials had released him only two years earlier, after he had served two and a half years for abducting and brutally assaulting (though not killing) another little girl.

Even the most die-hard liberals began to wonder whether, in this case, the sentencing for the first offense had been a little lenient. The maximum sentence for kidnapping in England, after all, is life imprisonment, and abducting little girls and torturing them is not something done in a fit of absentmindedness or by reason of a sudden rush of blood to the head. It tends to become a habit.

Yet British liberals balked at drawing wider conclusions from the case. The fact that most burglars, robbers, and other criminals have committed between five and 15 times as many crimes as authorities have charged them with, according to those lawbreakers I've spoken with, somehow does not weaken liberals' faith in leniency.

Criminals have no such illusions. I was in the prison where I work when a television report announced the Paul Whiting verdict. A group of prisoners watching the report asked me what I would do with the likes of him.

"What would you do?" I asked.

"We'd 'ang 'em," they said.

I noted that many other types of serious crime were much more common than Paul Whiting's and had a far greater effect upon society: the robbery of old people in the street, for example. Old people in Britain feared to go out because of it, I said.

"And they're afraid to stay at home," added one of the prisoners—"because of burglars."

"Precisely," I said. "What would you do with robbers and burglars of old people?"

The answer was unanimous: "We'd 'ang 'em."

I pointed out that every year in my hospital I meet with 400 men who beat their lovers, and with 400 women beaten, and often seriously injured, by their lovers. The men, all recidivists, would continue their violent behavior for 20, 30, or 40 years. The consequences of their behavior were often devastating, especially for their children.

"What would you do with them?" I asked.

"We'd 'ang 'em," they replied.

Within a few minutes, the prisoners had produced a criminal code that made the English eighteenth-century Bloody Code seem mild and forgiving by comparison. They were surprised that I was not quite as keen on execution as they were. But at least they understood one cardinal fact of the modern world, as our educated liberals do not: that leniency for the criminal is punishment of the innocent. *—Theodore Dalrymple*

Uncle Sam Needs Hackers

A strong homeland defense requires secure computer networks, and hackers can strengthen them.

In the War on Terrorism, the U.S. desperately needs cyber-whizzes to protect its critical computer infrastructure. The threat is real: imagine terrorists disrupting the Eastern–U.S. power grid during an August heat wave, while simultaneously shutting down the 911 emergency-response system. The CIA reports that 20 countries, some of which may sponsor terrorism, are preparing cyberwar capabilities for use against the U.S. And we're

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not prepared: Congress gave the feds an F in cybersecurity this past November.

Hackers, who readily spot network weaknesses, can help. Not all hackers are destructive, if clever, anarchists: most go about their illegal activities as a kind of ego-boosting "gotcha," breaking into protected computer systems without doing harm, but only exposing how the systems are vulnerable to attack. System administrators can then patch the hole before someone else does real damage. Why not put some of these bright people to work fighting terror?

The private sector is already hiring hackers. The network security firm @stake is built around a clique of Cambridge, Massachusetts–based hackers who scripted some of the system-breaching tools that the real cyber–bad guys use to this day. Companies now pay these erstwhile mischief makers to perform attack simulations on their computer networks.

Foreign governments use hackers, too—but Washington isn't interested, at least not publicly. Richard Clarke, head of the new federal Office of Cyber Security, likes to tell the story of three teenagers—two Californians and one Israeli—who broke into Pentagon logistics and transportation systems in the midst of a brewing crisis in Iraq in early 1998. Pentagon chiefs feared that the Iraqis had done it but eventually found the teen culprits. The two Americans were prosecuted, sentenced to three years' probation, and forbidden unsupervised use of the Internet; the Israeli, acclaimed as "damn good" by then–prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wound up working for the Israeli military.

A spokeswoman for Congressman Stephen Horn, chairman of the House subcommittee that flunked the feds in computer security, explains that federal cyber-warriors must pass "background checks and security clearances." It's a reasonable precaution. Nonetheless, the feds might still use hackers with less than sainted pasts to help secure non-classified networks and to train law-enforcement officials in the techniques of cyber-crime—just as the CIA will be recruiting unsavory characters who can help us fight terror. Even those hackers caught breaking cyber-crime laws—the United States Security Act of 2001 makes hacking a crime punishable by up to 20 years in prison—could be "flipped" to serve our national interests, with software that logs a computer's every keystroke used to keep an electronic eye on their computer activities.

When the digital war begins in earnest—that's *when*, not if—we'll need an expanded, experienced cyber-militia to help us win it. —*Edward John Craig*

Greedy Hospitals

In the wake of September 11, the Empire State's hospitals are up to old tricks.

New York's hospitals are tireless lobbyists for ever greater government subsidies, so it's no surprise that they've shamelessly tried to capitalize on September 11 by chasing after hundreds of millions of dollars in government aid.

Though the terrorist attack didn't overburden the city's emergency rooms, just three weeks later the hospitals rushed out a cobbled-together "study" claiming that it had cost them a staggering $340 million. Included in this huge sum was $200 million in projected losses—that is, losses not directly related to September 11 but that the hospitals *anticipated* because of a terror-intensified slowdown in the New York economy. The hospitals argued that the feds should pony up for this expected revenue shortfall and—as is frequent with their pleas of this sort—they warned of dire consequences to the city's health-care system if the government didn't come up with the cash. Fortunately, federal legislators, as a rule much less friendly to New York hospitals than local politicians tend to be, met the industry's entreaties with incredulity.

But the hospitals are relentless, so just a few weeks after their first request went nowhere, industry lobbyists issued a second report, this one estimating that the hospitals needed nearly *$1 billion* to get ready to deal with bio-terrorism and other terrorist threats. This study was even flimsier than its predecessor. Offering few details about how the hospitals had arrived at such a big price tag, it mostly rehashed old complaints about how federal cutbacks have gutted hospital resources. Privately, though, public health officials suggested that better communication and coordination, not a huge boost in funds, could best solve most of the readiness problems that the hospitals described.

Even some of the industry's biggest supporters seemed embarrassed by the audacity of these requests. New York's hospital-friendly U.S. senators, Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer, only sought $140 million for hospitals in the federal aid package

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Soundings

for Gotham, the amount of direct losses the institutions claimed from September 11. The $140 million total was included in the bailout legislation that passed in Washington this past December.

Despite the hospitals' lobbying setbacks, it's too soon to count them out. In the months ahead, they'll warn of an impending health-care crisis and pressure politicians by feeding stories to the press about looming layoffs. Those stories in turn will all fail to note that New York's hospitals have done little to downsize and consolidate, even though medical advances enable doctors to treat more people as outpatients and shorten hospital stays. They will also ignore the giant subsidies that the hospitals already rake in, including yet a further $9 billion that the state's Health Care Reform Act of 2000 gave to the health-care system over four years.

EVERETT COLLECTION

The Bush administration should prepare for this onslaught and view any further requests from the hospitals skeptically. The administration should instead use federal auditors to verify the hospitals' claims before releasing any further funds. U.S. taxpayers shouldn't have to pick up the tab for the Empire State's out-of-control health-care profligacy. —*Steven Malanga*

Why the Scouts Ban Homosexuals

A New York scoutmaster's indictment explains everything.

Homosexual activists have been at daggers drawn with the Boy Scouts of America since 1998, when the Scouts decided to fire any troop leader who announced his homosexuality, and the Supreme Court's backing of Scout policy in 2000 only intensified the conflict. In the homosexual activists' view, the Scouts are bigots, exhibiting bias against a victimized minority. The Scouts respond that their purpose is to serve boys, not scoutmasters—and that purpose requires them to protect young boys from any pederasts who predictably might be drawn to them.

The Scouts' side in this argument received powerful support recently when Manhattan D.A. Robert Morgenthau indicted 42-year-old Jerrold Schwartz, a now ex-scoutmaster of the Upper East Side's Troop 666 (Satan's supposed signature number) for repeatedly sodomizing a young teenager in his group over a three-year period during the mid-nineties. On a secretly recorded tape, Schwartz admits to the boy, "I have a place for you in my heart, but obviously it went from my heart to the wrong parts of my body." The alleged victim of Schwartz's abuse is now 20, a pitiful, self-mutilating figure in a Florida rehab center for drug addiction and alcohol abuse. Last month, more accusations surfaced: four other credible victims, prosecutors say, claim that Schwartz molested them. In these cases, however, the statute of limitations has run out.

Though Schwartz wants a no-jail deal, the judge has given him a reasonable ultimatum: take your chances with a jury or plead guilty and face up to six years in prison. One of Schwartz's earlier alleged victims offered his own idea of retribution, giving a glimpse of the kind of damage he feels the scoutmaster did to him: "I say ten minutes in a room with me—that's a fair sentence."

One such instance of sexual abuse is enough to make the case for the Scouts' ban on homosexual scoutmasters, but Schwartz is far from the only example the Scouts have had to deal with. Ex-scoutmasters from Massachusetts and Iowa to Oklahoma and Utah have recently faced charges on such offenses. Cases of sexual abuse in the Scouts have been rising, going from 70 a year two decades ago to roughly 200 a year by the late 1990s. In a culture that increasingly sexualizes children and seeks to normalize homosexuality, no wonder the Scouts' hold tight to their exclusionary policy. Parents won't entrust their kids to the Scouts' care if the organization can't guarantee their safety.

For the homosexual activists, what percentage of sexually abused kids would be an acceptable trade-off against the self-esteem of homosexual scoutmasters? To any reasonable American, and certainly to any parent, the answer is: zero.

—*Stefan Kanfer*

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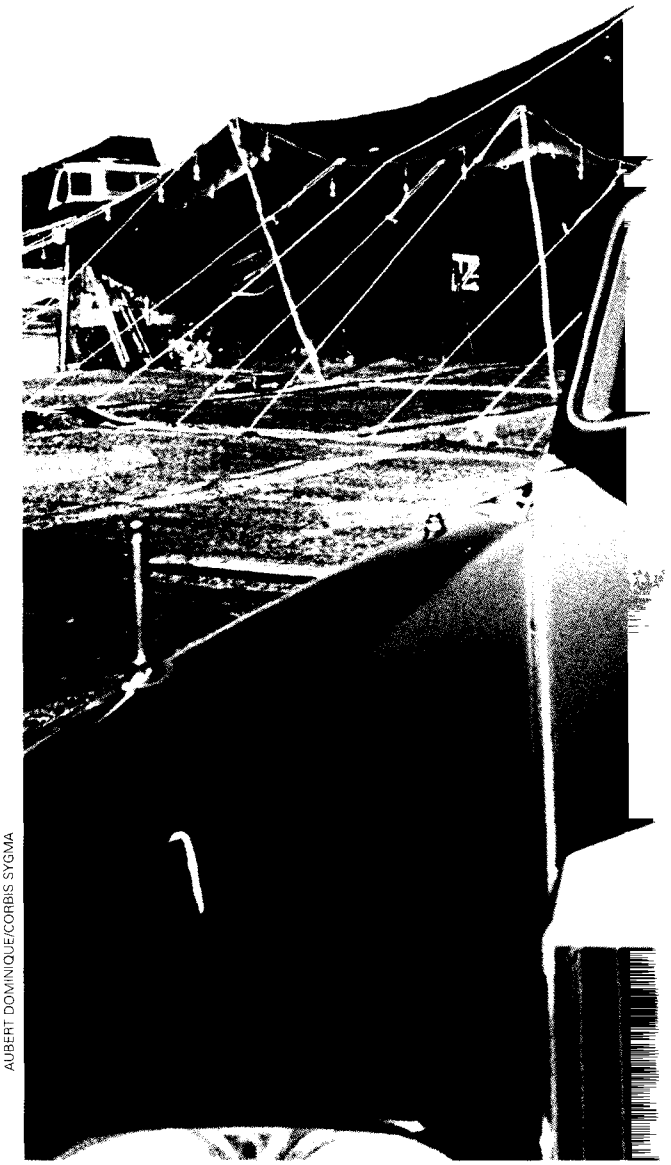
Why the Muslims Misjudged Us

Middle Easterners fatally misunderstood the culture that makes us strong.

Victor Davis Hanson

Since September 11, we have heard mostly slander and lies about the West from radical Islamic fundamentalists in their defense of the terrorists. But the Middle Eastern mainstream—diplomats, intellectuals, and journalists—has also bombarded the American public with an array of unflattering images and texts, suggesting that the extremists' anti-Americanism may not be an eccentricity of the ignorant but rather a representative slice of the views of millions. For example, Egyptian Nobel Prize–winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz reportedly announced from his Cairo home that America's bombing of the Taliban was "just as despicable a crime" as the September 11 attacks—as if the terrorists' unprovoked mass murder of civilians were the moral equivalent of selected air strikes against enemy soldiers in wartime. Americans, reluctant to answer back their Middle Eastern critics for fear of charges of "Islamophobia" or "Arab smearing," have let such accusations go largely unchecked.

Two striking themes—one overt, one implied—characterize most Arab invective: first, there is some sort of equivalence—political, cultural, and military—between the West and the Muslim world; and second, America has been exceptionally



AUBERT DOMINIQUE/CORBIS SYGMA

Owning Western goods provides no automatic insight into the culture that produced them.

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unkind toward the Middle East. Both premises are false and reveal that the temple of anti-Americanism is supported by pillars of utter ignorance.

Few in the Middle East have a clue about the nature, origins, or history of democracy, a word that, along with its family ("constitution," "freedom," and "citizen"), has no history in the Arab vocabulary, or indeed any philological pedigree in *any* language other than Greek and Latin and their modern European offspring. Consensual government is not the norm of human politics but a rare and precious idea, not imposed or bequeathed but usually purchased with the blood of heroes and patriots, whether in classical Athens, revolutionary America, or more recently in Eastern Europe. Democracy's lifeblood is secularism and religious tolerance, coupled with free speech and economic liberty.

Afghan tribal councils, without written constitutions, are better than tyranny, surely; but they do not make consensual government. Nor do the Palestinian parliament and advisory bodies in Kuwait. None of these faux assemblies is elected by an unbound citizenry, free to criticize (much less recall, impeach, or depose) their heads of state by legal means, or even to speak openly to journalists about the failings of their own government. Plato remarked of such superficial government-by-deliberation that even thieves divvy up the loot by give-and-take, suggesting that the human tendency to parley is natural but is not the same as the formal machinery of democratic government.

Our own cultural elites, either out of timidity or sometimes ignorance of the uniqueness of our own political institutions, seldom make such distinctions. But the differences are critical, because they lie unnoticed at the heart of the crisis in the Muslim world, and they explain our own tenuous relations with the regimes in the Gulf and the Middle East. Israel does not really know to what degree the Palestinian authorities have a real constituency, *because the people of the West Bank themselves do not know either*—inasmuch as they cannot debate one another on domestic television or campaign on the streets for alternate policies. Mr. Arafat assumed power by Western fiat; when he finally was allowed to hold real and periodic elections in his homeland, he simply perpetuated autocracy—as corrupt as it is brutal.

By the same token, we are surprised at the duplicity of the Gulf States in defusing internal dissent by redirecting it against Americans, forgetting that such is the way of all dictators, who, should they lose office, do not face the golden years of Jimmy Carter's busy house-building or Bill Clinton's self-absorbed angst. Either they dodge the mob's bullets or scurry to a fortified compound on the French coast a day ahead of the posse. The royal family of Saudi Arabia cannot act out of principle because no principle other than force put and keeps them in power. All the official jets, snazzy embassies, and expensive press agents cannot hide that these illegitimate rulers are not in the political sense Western at all.

How sad that intellectuals of the Arab world—themselves only given freedom when they emigrate to the United States or Europe—profess support for democratic reform from Berkeley or Cambridge but secretly fear that, back home, truly free elections would usher in folk like the Iranian imams, who, in the manner of the Nazis in 1933, would thereupon destroy the very machinery that elected them. The fact is that democracy does not spring fully formed from the head of Zeus but rather is an epiphenomenon—the formal icing on a preexisting cake of egalitarianism, economic opportunity, religious tolerance, and constant self-criticism. The former cannot appear in the Muslim world until gallant men and women insist upon the latter—and therein demolish the antidemocratic and medieval forces of tribalism, authoritarian traditionalism, and Islamic fundamentalism.

How much easier for non-voters of the Arab world to vent frustration at the West, as if, in some Machiavellian plot, a democratic America, Israel, and Europe have conspired to prevent Muslims from adopting the Western invention of democracy! Democracy is hardly a Western secret to be closely guarded and kept from the *mujaheddin*. Islam is welcome to it, with the blessing and subsidy of the West. Yes, we must promote democracy abroad in the Muslim world; but only they, not we, can ensure its success.

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The catastrophe of the Muslim world is also explicable in its failure to grasp the nature of Western success, which springs neither from luck nor resources, genes nor geography. Like third-world Marxists of the 1960s, who put blame for their own self-inflicted misery upon corporations, colonialism, and racism—anything other than the absence of real markets and a free society—the Islamic intelligentsia recognizes the Muslim world's inferiority vis-à-vis the West, but it then seeks to fault others for its own self-created fiasco. Government spokesmen in the Middle East should ignore the nonsense of the cultural relativists and discredited Marxists and have the courage to say that they are poor because their populations are nearly half illiterate, that their governments are not free, that their economies are not open, and that their fundamentalists impede scientific inquiry, unpopular expression, and cultural exchange.

"Few in the Middle East have a clue about the nature of democracy, a word that has no history in the Arab vocabulary."

Tragically, the immediate prospects for improvement are dismal, inasmuch as the war against terrorism has further isolated the Middle East. Travel, foreign education, and academic exchanges—the only sources of future hope for the Arab world—have screeched to a halt. All the conferences in Cairo about Western bias and media distortion cannot hide this self-inflicted catastrophe—and the growing ostracism and suspicion of Middle Easterners in the West.

But blaming the West, and Israel, for the unendurable reality is easier for millions of Muslims than admitting the truth. Billions of barrels of oil, large populations, the Suez Canal, the fertility of the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates valleys, invaluable geopolitical locations, and a host of other natural advantages that helped create wealthy civilizations in the past now yield an excess of misery, rather than the riches of resource-poor Hong Kong or Switzerland. How could it be otherwise, when it takes bribes and decades to obtain a building permit in Cairo; when *habeas corpus* is a cruel joke in Baghdad; and when Saudi Arabia turns out more graduates in Islamic studies than in medicine or engineering?

To tackle illiteracy, gratuitous state-sanctioned killing, and the economic sclerosis that comes from corruption and state control would require the courage and self-examination of Eastern Europe, Russia, South America, even of China. Instead, wedded to the old bromides that the West causes their misery, that fundamentalist Islam and crackpot mullahs have had no role in their disasters, that the subjugation of women is a "different" rather than a foul (and economically foolish) custom, Muslim intellectuals have railed these past few months about the creation of Israel half a century ago, and they have sat either silent or amused while the mob in their streets chants in praise of a mass murderer. Meanwhile millions of Muslims tragically stay sick and hungry in silence.

Has the Muslim world gone mad in its threats and ultimatums? Throughout this war, Muslims have saturated us with overt and with insidious warnings. If America retaliated to the mass murder of its citizens, the Arab world would turn on us; if we bombed during Ramadan, we would incur lasting hatred; if we continued in our mission to avenge our dead, not an American would be safe in the Middle East. More disturbing even than the screaming street demonstrations have been the polite admonitions of corrupt grandees like Crown Prince Abdallah of Saudi Arabia or editor Abdul Rahman al Rashed of Saudi Arabia's state-owned *Al Sharq al Awsat*. Don't they see the impotence and absurdity of their veiled threats, backed neither by military force nor cultural dynamism? Don't they realize that nothing is more fatal to the security of a state than the divide between what it threatens and what it can deliver?

There is an abyss between such rhetoric and the world we actually live in, an abyss called power. Out of politeness, we needn't crow over the relative military capability of 1 billion Muslims and 300

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million Americans; but we should remember that the lethal, 2,500-year Western way of war is the reflection of very different ideas about personal freedom, civic militarism, individuality on the battlefield, military technology, logistics, decisive battle, group discipline, civilian audit, and the dissemination and proliferation of knowledge.

Values and traditions—not guns, germs, and steel—explain why a tiny Greece of 50,000 square miles crushed a Persia 20 times larger; why Rome, not Carthage, created world government; why Cortés was in Tenochtitlàn, and Montezuma not in Barcelona; why gunpowder in its home in China was a pastime for the elite while, when stolen and brought to Europe, it became a deadly and ever evolving weapon of the masses. Even at the nadir of Western power in the medieval ages, a Europe divided by religion and fragmented into feudal states could still send thousands of thugs into the Holy Land, while a supposedly ascendant Islam had neither the ships nor the skill nor the logistics to wage *jihad* in Scotland or Brittany. Much is made of 500 years of Ottoman dominance over a feuding Orthodox, Christian, and Protestant West; but the sultans were powerful largely to the degree that they crafted alliances with a distrustful France and the warring Italian city-states, copied the Arsenal at Venice, turned out replicas of Italian and German canon, and moved their capital to European Constantinople. Moreover, their "dominance" amounted only to a rough naval parity with the West on the old Roman Mediterranean; they never came close to the conquest of the heart of Western Europe.

Europeans, not Ottomans, colonized central and southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas—and not merely because of their Atlantic ports or ocean ships but rather because of their long-standing attitudes and traditions about scientific inquiry, secular thought, free markets, and individual ingenuity and spontaneity. To be sure, military power is not a referendum on morality—Pizarro's record in Peru makes as grim reading as the Germans' in central Africa; it is, rather, a reflection of the amoral dynamism that fuels ships and soldiers.

PETER TURNLEY/CORBIS

Middle Eastern poverty—like that of these Egyptians who sift through garbage dumps—stems from the region's illiteracy, lack of freedom, intolerant fundamentalism, and government-controlled economies.

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We are militarily strong, and the Arab world abjectly weak, not because of greater courage, superior numbers, higher IQs, more ores, or better weather, but because of our culture. When it comes to war, 1 billion people and the world's oil are not nearly as valuable military assets as MIT, West Point, the U.S. House of Representatives, C-Span, Bill O'Riley, and the G.I. Bill. Between Xerxes on his peacock throne overlooking Salamis and Saddam on his balcony reviewing his troops, between the Greeks arguing and debating before they rowed out with Themistocles and the Americans haranguing one another on the eve of the Gulf War, lies a 2,500-year cultural tradition that explains why the rest of the world copies its weapons, uniforms, and military organization from us, not vice versa.

Many Middle Easterners have performed a great media charade throughout this war. They publish newspapers and televise the news, and thereby give the appearance of being modern and Western. But their reporters and anchormen are by no means journalists by Western standards of free and truthful inquiry. Whereas CNN makes a point of talking to the victims of collateral damage in Kabul, *al-Jazeera* would never interview the mothers of Israeli teenagers blown apart by Palestinian bombs. Nor does any Egyptian or Syrian television station welcome freewheeling debates or *Meet the Press*–style talk shows permitting criticism of the government or the national religion. Instead, they quibble over their own degrees of anti-Americanism and obfuscate the internal contradictions of Islam. The chief dailies in Algiers, Teheran, and Kuwait City look like *Pravda* of old. The entire Islamic media is a simulacrum of the West, lacking the life-giving spirit of debate and self-criticism.

As a result, when Americans see a cavalcade of talking Middle Eastern heads nod and blurt out the party line—that Israel is evil, that the United States is naïve and misled, that Muslims are victims, that the West may soon have to reckon with Islamic anger—they assume the talk is orchestrated and therefore worth listening to only for what it teaches about how authoritarian governments can coerce and corrupt journalists and intellectuals.

A novelist who writes whatever he pleases anywhere in the Muslim world is more likely to receive a *fatwa* and a mob at his courtyard than a prize for literary courage, as Naguib Mahfouz and Salman Rushdie have learned. No wonder a code of silence pervades the Islamic world. No wonder, too, that Islam is far more ignorant of us than we of it. And no wonder that the Muslims haven't a clue that, while their current furor is scripted, whipped up, and mercurial, ours is far deeper and more lasting.

Every Western intellectual knows Edward Said's much-hyped theory of "Orientalism," a purely mythical construct of how Western bias has misunderstood and distorted the Eastern "Other." In truth, the real problem is "Westernism"—the fatally erroneous idea in the Middle East that its propaganda-spewing Potemkin television stations give it a genuine understanding of the nature of America, an understanding Middle Easterners believe is deepened by the presence in their midst of a few McDonald's franchises and hired U.S. public-relations firms. That error—which mistakes ignorance for insight—helps explain why Usama bin Ladin so grossly miscalculated the devastating magnitude of our response to September 11. In reality, the most parochial American knows more about the repressive nature of the Gulf States than the most sophisticated and well-traveled sheikh understands about the cultural underpinnings of this country, including the freedom of speech and inquiry that is missing in the Islamic press.

Millions in the Middle East are obsessed with Israel, whether they live in sight of Tel Aviv or thousands of miles away. Their fury doesn't spring solely from genuine dismay over the hundreds of Muslims Israel has killed on the West Bank; after all, Saddam Hussein butchered hundreds of thousands of Shiites, Kurds, and Iranians, while few in Cairo or Damascus said a word. Syria's Assad liquidated perhaps 20,000 in sight of Israel, without a single demonstration in any Arab capital. The murder of some 100,000 Muslims in Algeria and 40,000 in Chechnya in the last decade provoked few intellectuals in the Middle East to call for a pan-Islamic protest. Clearly, the anger derives not from the tragic tally of the fallen but from Islamic rage that Israelis have defeated Muslims on the battlefield repeatedly, decisively, at will, and without modesty.

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If Israel were not so successful, free, and haughty—if it were beleaguered and tottering on the verge of ruin—perhaps it would be tolerated. But in a sea of totalitarianism and government-induced poverty, a relatively successful economy and a stable culture arising out of scrub and desert clearly irks its less successful neighbors. Envy, as the historian Thucydides reminds us, is a powerful emotion and has caused not a few wars.

If Israel did not exist, the Arab world, in its current fit of denial, would have to invent something like it to vent its frustrations. That is not to say there may not be legitimate concerns in the struggle over Palestine, but merely that for millions of Muslims the fight over such small real estate stems from a deep psychological wound. It isn't about *lebensraum* or some actual physical threat. Israel is a constant reminder that it is a nation's culture—not its geography or size or magnitude of its oil reserves—that determines its wealth or freedom. For the Middle East to make peace with Israel would be to declare war on itself, to admit that that its own fundamental way of doing business—not the Jews—makes it poor, sick, and weak.

"One billion people and the world's oil are not nearly as valuable military assets as MIT, West Point, and C-Span."

Throughout the Muslim world, myth and ignorance surround U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East. Yes, we give Israel aid, but less than the combined billions that go to the Palestinians and to Egypt, Jordan, and other Muslim countries. And it is one thing to subsidize a democratic and constitutional (if cantankerous) ally but quite another to pay for slander from theocratic or autocratic enemies. Though Israel has its fair share of fundamentalists and fanatics, the country is not the creation of clerics or strongmen but of European émigrés, who committed Israel from the start to democracy, free speech, and abundant self-critique.

Far from egging on Israel, the United States actually restrains the Israeli military, whose organization and discipline, along with the sophisticated Israeli arms industry, make it quite capable of annihilating nearly all its bellicose neighbors without American aid. Should the United States withdraw from active participation in the Middle East and let the contestants settle their differences on the battlefield, Israel, not the Arab world, would win. The military record of four previous conflicts does not lie. Arafat should remember who saved him in Lebanon; it was no power in the Middle East that brokered his exodus and parted the waves of Israeli planes and tanks for his safe passage to the desert.

The Muslim world suffers from political amnesia, we now have learned, and so has forgotten not only Arafat's resurrection but also American help to beleaguered Afghanis, terrified Kuwaitis, helpless Kurds and Shiites, starving Somalis, and defenseless Bosnians—direct intervention that has cost the United States much more treasure and lives than mere economic aid for Israel ever did. They forget; but we remember the Palestinians cheering in Nablus hours after thousands of our innocents were incinerated in New York, the hagiographic posters of a mass murderer in the streets of Muslim capitals, and the smug remonstrations of Saudi prince Alwaleed to Mayor Giuliani at Ground Zero.

Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti Westernized elites find psychological comfort in their people's anti-American rhetoric, not out of real grievance but perhaps as reassurance that their own appetite for all things Western doesn't constitute rejection of their medieval religion or their thirteenth-century caliphate. Their apologists in the United States dissemble when they argue that these Gulf sheikhs are forced to master a doublespeak for foreign consumption, or that they are better than the frightening alternative, or that they are victims of unfair American anger that is ignorant of Wahhabi custom. In their present relationship with the terrorists, these old-fashioned autocrats are neutrals only in the sense that they now play the cagier role of Franco's Spain to Hitler's Germany. They aid and

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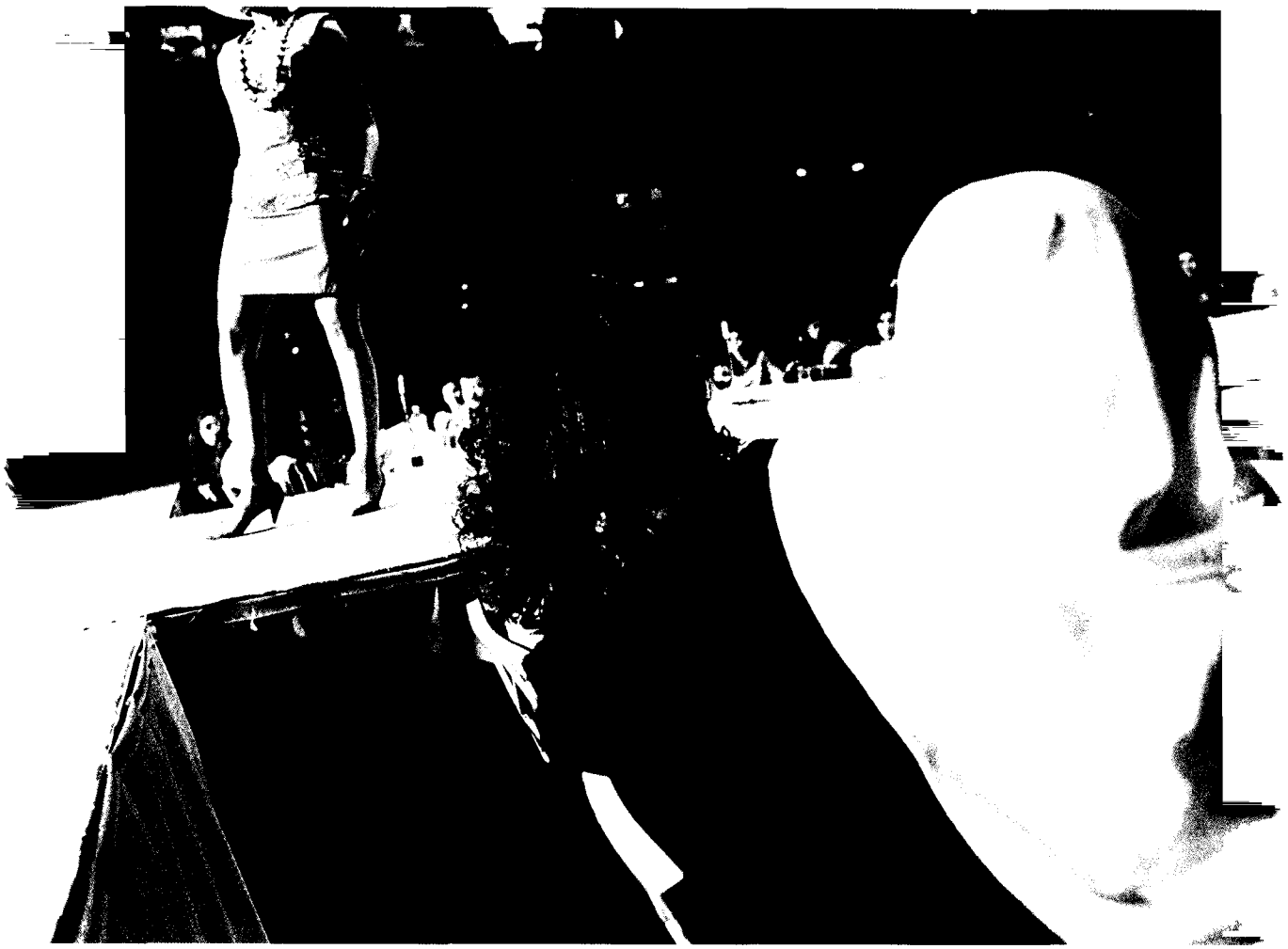

A dual loathing and attraction for things Western pervades the Middle East.

abet our enemies, but never overtly. If the United States prevails, the Saudis can proclaim that they were always with us; should we lose a shooting war with the terrorists, the princes can swear that their prior neutrality really constituted allegiance to radical Islam all along.

In matters of East-West relations, immigration has always been a one-way phenomenon. Thousands flocked to Athens and Rome; few left for Parthia or Numidia unless to colonize or exploit. People sneak into South, not North, Korea—in the same manner that few from Hong Kong once braved gunfire to reach Peking (unless to invest and profit). Few Israeli laborers are going to the West Bank to seek construction jobs. In this vein is the Muslim world's longing for the very soil of America. Even in the crucible of war, we have discovered that our worst critics love us in the concrete as much as they hate us in the abstract.

For all the frothing, it seems that millions of our purported enemies wish to visit, study, or (better yet) live in the United States—and this is true not just of Westernized professors or globe-trotting tycoons but of hijackers, terrorists, the children of

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the Taliban, the offspring of Iranian mullahs, and the spoiled teenage brats of our Gulf critics. The terrorists visited lap dancers, took out frequent-flier miles, spent hours on the Internet, had cell phones strapped to their hips, and hobnobbed in Las Vegas—parasitic on a culture not their own, fascinated with toys they could not make, and always ashamed that their lusts grew more than they could be satisfied. Until September 11, their ilk had been like fleas on a lazy, plump dog, gnashing their tiny proboscises to gain bloody nourishment or inflict small welts on a distracted host who found them not worth the scratch.

This dual loathing and attraction for things Western is characteristic of the highest echelon of the terrorists themselves, often Western-educated, English-speaking, and hardly poor. Emblematic is the evil genius of al-Qaida, the sinister Dr. al-Zawahiri: he grew up in Cairo affluence, his family enmeshed in all the Westernized institutions of Egypt.

"The terrorists were parasitic on a culture not their own, fascinated with toys they could not make."

Americans find this Middle Eastern cultural schizophrenia maddening, especially in its inability to fathom that all the things that Muslim visitors profess to hate—equality of the sexes, cultural freedom, religious tolerance, egalitarianism, free speech, and secular rationalism—are precisely what give us the material things that they want in the first place. CDs and sexy bare midriffs are the fruits of a society that values freedom, unchecked inquiry, and individual expression more than the dictates of state or church; wild freedom and wild materialism are part of the American character. So bewildered Americans now ask themselves: Why do so many of these anti-Americans, who profess hatred of the West and reverence for the purity of an energized Islam or a fiery Palestine, enroll in Chico State or UCLA instead of *madrassas* in Pakistan or military academies in Iraq?

The embarrassing answer would explain nearly everything, from bin Ladin to the *intifada*. Dads and moms who watch *al-Jazeera* and scream in the street at the Great Satan really would prefer that their children have dollars, an annual CAT scan, a good lawyer, air conditioning, and Levis in American hell than be without toilet paper, suffer from intestinal parasites, deal with the secret police, and squint with uncorrected vision in the Islamic paradise of Cairo, Teheran, and Gaza. Such a fundamental and intolerable paradox in the very core of a man's heart—multiplied millions of times over—is not a healthy thing either for them or for us, as we have learned since September 11.

Most Americans recognize and honor the past achievements of Islamic civilization and the contribution of Middle-Eastern immigrants to the United States and Europe, as well as the traditional hospitality shown visitors to the Muslim world. And so we have long shown patience with those who hate us, and more curiosity than real anger.

But that was then, and this is now. A two-kiloton explosion that incinerated thousands of our citizens—planned by Middle Easterners with the indirect financial support of purportedly allied governments, the applause of millions, and the snickering and smiles of millions more—has had an effect that grows not wanes.

So a neighborly bit of advice for our Islamic friends and their spokesmen abroad: topple your pillars of ignorance and the edifice of your anti-Americanism. Try to seek difficult answers from within to even more difficult questions without. Do not blame others for problems that are largely self-created or seek solutions over here when your answers are mostly at home. Please, think hard about what you are saying and writing about the deaths of thousands of Americans and your relationship with the United States. America has been a friend more often than not to you. But now you are on the verge of turning its people—who create, not follow, government—into an enemy: a very angry and powerful enemy that may be yours for a long, long time to come. ■

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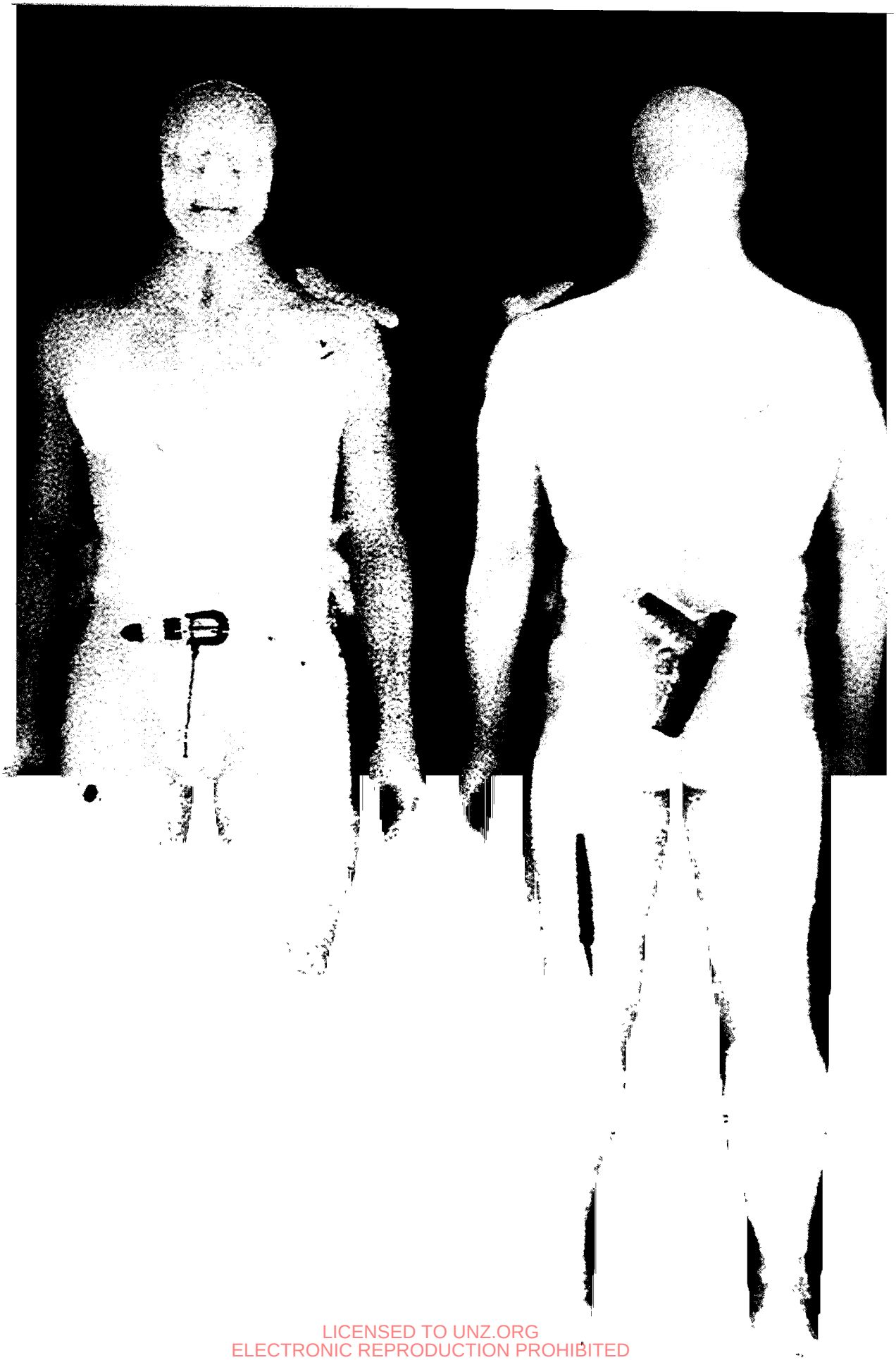

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How Technology Will Defeat Terrorism

At home and abroad, digital wizardry will keep us safe.

Peter Huber and Mark P. Mills

In transit across Manhattan on any given day are some 4 million letters, 3 million people, half a million motor vehicles and their contents, and half a million parcels—any of which may be carrying something lethal. Step by step, cities like New York must now learn to watch and track everything that moves. Airport screening is coming to much of the rest of civilian life; but it will have to be much smoother, faster, more accurate screening than airports have today, or life will just grind to a halt.

However much local governments may yearn for a one-stop federal solution to their new security problems, much of the initiative and innovation will almost certainly be left to them. And for obvious reasons, the challenge will be especially great in places like Manhattan, where the largest number of potential targets attracts the largest number of cars, packages, and people—every one of which could be a bearer of destruction.

In the post–September 11 world, we know we have to see the plastic explosives in the truck before they detonate, the anthrax before it's dispersed, the sarin nerve gas before it gets into the air-conditioning duct—and not just see it but recognize it. Our imaging systems will have to distinguish between the scaffolding on a Wonder Bra and the wiring on a bomb. We have, of course, slow, conventional ways of doing all this in a forensic laboratory. But the challenge now is to do it in bulk and in real time. How do you even begin to do this?

Threat recognition is, fundamentally, an exercise in the analysis and transmission of information. Imaging systems and transponders will generate huge amounts of digital data; intelligent networks, pattern-recognition software, and remote databases will make sense of the data as it comes in, chiefly by comparing the image at hand against large databases of stored images. We can't begin to screen the flow of people and goods properly without a massive deployment of digital technology to perform these functions for us.

The first step is to divide the civilian world into two, separating the trustworthy cooperators from the noncooperators, so we don't have to search *every* car, package, and pocket. The airlines already make this separation. They already have detailed

We now have the technology to see through anything—trucks, cars, packages, suitcases, and clothes; this X-ray scanner, for example, can spot not just metal weapons but also such soft objects as plastic explosives.

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profiles of most travelers readily at hand—from credit cards, travel agents, and travel histories—and they effectively enlist us as deputy security agents when they ask us about the packing and custody of our bags after establishing our identity. The FAA uses such data, in a limited fashion, with the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System that helps target passengers whose checked baggage should get a thorough examination. The same principles can work to screen vehicles, packages, letters, and most everything else that moves.

To understand how, consider the way quite similar tools are currently solving the problem of highway congestion. The tollbooth transponders now spreading rapidly across the United States—New York's E-ZPass system is an example—track cooperative targets very effectively and save willing cooperators a lot of time, compared with the toll collectors or coin baskets of old. The relatively primitive friend-recognition network to which E-ZPass belongs now extends across all of New York and from New England down to the Mid-Atlantic states. Other networks are more sophisticated, like the new beltway around Toronto, a toll road without tollbooths: transponders, cameras, and license-plate numbers provide the billing information. Three years ago, Singapore implemented a much more comprehensive version of the same thing—a card-based toll system designed to curb the massive traffic jams that choke that tiny island-state. Electronic devices mounted on gantries above the road deduct the appropriate charge as the cars pass under them. Even systems as simple as these can be linked up to security networks, too, and can do much to enhance safety, because so much of security comes down to establishing identity and tracking patterns of conduct—just the sorts of things that the automatic toll collectors already do.

Quite similar technologies that address the congestion of people—and in the much more demanding context of maintaining security—are now up and running. The brand-new iris-scanning system at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam is a dramatic example: you register, and then stare briefly into a lens instead of presenting your passport. The iris is the most personally distinct feature of the human body, even more distinct than a fingerprint. And yes, the toaster-size camera can see through your glasses and contact lenses. As with E-ZPass, nobody *has* to participate; you're free to wait in line instead. An affront to civil liberties? Hardly. You have to volunteer—and then pay about $100—for the privilege of getting your eyeball into their database. The plan is to let you shop the airport stores that way, too, rather than having to swipe your credit card.

Similar technologies can separate innocuous packages from the suspect ones that need closer inspection. Most everything that's shipped by UPS, FedEx, and even the Postal Service (if it's dispatched through a postal meter rather than with ordinary stamps) is already bar-coded and repeatedly scanned while in transit. This is how the package companies maintain websites that can tell you exactly where your inbound package is as it moves through their system. But technology is now set to move far beyond the printed code and the optical scanner. Motorola's BiStatix radio-frequency identification technology, for example, combines silicon with printed ink to embed smart electronic tags ubiquitously in packaging materials, so that packages automatically announce their whereabouts, without any human having to scan them. There are profound economic advantages in being able to "talk to" your packages the entire length of the supply chain—this is the heart of shrinking your warehouses and your inventory, and building a business around just-in-time deliveries.

The civil defense advantages are equally apparent: a package that begins in the hands of a trustworthy shipper like Amazon and is tracked carefully while in transit from New Castle, Delaware, to New York City can be admitted without more ado into a downtown office building and opened with confidence. The by-mail terrorist invariably prefers stamps, a handwritten address, and a late-night drop into an anonymous mailbox.

All of these tracking and screening systems that identify cooperating and friendly targets are prey to sabotage, of course. Smart cards can be stolen. With all these systems, you have to have intelligent networks and databases behind the wall to keep watch for wolves clothed as sheep. The machines have to look for patterns of activity, for daily habits—and for breaks in them—just as Citibank already does when it spots what looks like an unusual spending pattern on your credit

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card. Try to buy four cheap color TVs in a store in a high-crime neighborhood you never visit, and a computer somewhere deep back in the network is almost certain to initiate an immediate inquiry from your bank.

Today we use these systems, which are ubiquitous and affordable, chiefly for mundane economic screening, but they inevitably will be extended to track security as well. In response to the anthrax scare, public health officials are already taking steps to tap into the networks and databases that pharmacies use to track drug purchases and restock their shelves. When unusual numbers of people in a neighborhood begin feeling lousy, they'll begin buying all sorts of conventional medicines; those purchases may signal a biological attack well before hospital labs can spot the pattern.

"You need intelligent networks and databases behind the wall to keep watch for wolves clothed as sheep."

Thus, while talk of national ID cards inches forward in the federal government's marble halls, identification systems are already evolving organically, and very much more rapidly, throughout the marketplace. Local governments should help set standards and facilitate collaboration with the private sector, so that building owners, garages, toll collectors, banks, package-delivery companies, and many others already in the track-and-screen business can effectively coordinate and integrate the identification technologies that they're deploying anyway. Yes, to be sure, the ACLU will protest; but like it or not, this is the way things should go and inevitably will go, too.

Once you can identify the vast majority of people, cars, and packages that are innocuous and can be waved quickly through the gate, you can inspect more closely the few that may not be, and if necessary interdict them.

Dealing with the noncooperative targets is a five-step process. First, you project electromagnetic waves across a wide range of frequencies, from radar, millimeter-waves, and infrared heat through visible light, and X rays. There are other alternatives, too—magnetic pulses and acoustic waves, for example. Second, you carefully look for what gets through or bounces back. Third, you intensely analyze the same, crunching the numbers to turn the massive stream of return data into a coherent image. Fourth, you make sense of it, generally by another massive round of number crunching for pattern recognition, comparing the image at hand with huge databases of images stored previously. Fifth, if you don't like what you see, then you kill it, disable it, or at the very least shunt it aside for closer and more leisurely scrutiny. If you see anthrax, say, kill it with a burst of gamma rays or an electromagnetic pulse intense enough to shatter DNA.

In its most familiar form, "sight" begins with sunlight and ends with eyeballs. But how do you "see" the molecules in plastic explosives, in nerve gas, in cocaine, or in anthrax DNA? A dog's nose is pretty good at this form of "vision," which is why places like airports are filled with canines these days. Chemical laboratories can work out the molecular composition of anything, given a big enough sample and enough time to run it through a lot of bulky hardware. But for mass screening, in real time, you project photon power—electromagnetic power—across a wide range of different frequencies, and if you do that cleverly enough, you can see most anything.

Plain old light will take you a long way in distinguishing shiny aluminum from dull wood. But if you push the frequency up quite a lot further, through visible light and on up into X rays, you can see broken bones; and if, in addition, you also analyze what bounces back, you can get quite a good profile of molecular composition, too. "Light" in millimeter wavelengths penetrates all sorts of clutter—like foliage, clothes, boxes, and Sheetrock—yet bounces off things we do want to see, like metals, plastic, and flesh, much like X rays, but at much lower energy levels that pose no threat at all to human health. (A company called Millivision has even developed a millimeter-wave "flashlight" that detects respiration at a distance—a concept originally

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pursued to locate wounded soldiers but equally useful in searching collapsed buildings.)

Use still more of the electromagnetic rainbow—infrared bands, ultraviolet, and so forth—and you see still more. Aim the "light" from multiple angles—as a medical CAT scan does, for example—and you can build complete three-dimensional images. From airport scanners to on-board radar for cars, these things aren't matters of theory or laboratory speculation any more. A whole constellation of imaging products is now maturing into commercial viability. All it takes is enough different kinds of "light," and electronic eyeballs to match—and powerful number-crunching microprocessors to make sense of the huge amounts of data generated from these multi-spectral, multi-dimensional scanning systems—and you can see through just about any truck, car, pocket, suitcase, or package you want, looking for just about anything you choose.

If the seeing and recognizing of threats isn't highly automated, the prospect of gridlock will prevent screening from happening at all. So real-time networking will be crucial, as in the federal program that provides law-enforcement officers with fast, nationwide access to fingerprint databases, together with pattern-recognition software that fully automates the process of finding matches. Right now, real-time fingerprint recognition is moving out into the field as a wireless application, so that an officer who makes a stop can check prints in three minutes. All wireless, all fully automated. It's headed for three seconds, and the faster we get there the better.

Now just do the same for irises. And the backscatter X-ray profile generated by Semtex. Or sarin gas. And dozens of other threat signatures.

The data volumes are staggering. The automated luggage scanner in the catacombs of the airport today, as it spins a highly advanced CAT scanner around your toothpaste and dirty linen, generates so much data that it would take about 4,000 dial-up modems to push it down regular phone lines. The

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Iris scanners can quickly identify cooperative citizens and separate them from those whom security officials should check closely.

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task is so challenging that, so far, only a handful of U.S. airports do it.

The computing requirements are staggering, too. While it takes a fair amount of a highly paid physician's time to interpret a hospital CAT scan, the FAA insists on a suitcase automatically scanned and analyzed by computer every six seconds. It will be the same for buildings, stadiums, bridges, and tunnels.

A decade ago, none of this would have been economically feasible. It is today. It will entail a lot of new investment; but the technology is there, or very close to there—real, commercial, functional. It's going to get deployed, not only at airports but even more widely on private premises and, later, for municipal uses.

So what happens when you see and recognize something you don't like? You kill it. Many new options are materializing here, too, more than a few of them employing technologies very similar to the sensor technologies.

Here's just one example. Pump up millimeter-wave power high enough—at present, this takes something more like a television tube than a semiconductor chip, but arrays of chips will get there soon enough—pump up the power, and you can cook things, or people, or hostile microorganisms, at quite a distance. If you choose, you can make anyone within several hundred meters feel like his whole body is touching a very hot light bulb, encouraging him to run away, fast. The Pentagon calls this "active denial technology." If you shift the frequency a bit and go for a longer pulse, you begin doing more lasting damage: "terminal denial," the Pentagon might call it.

Such high-tech power-projecting gizmos may seem to have little relevance for maintaining security in the heart of New York—until you begin worrying about anthrax, say. Killing biologics is already a familiar objective in the biopharmaceutical industry. Blood extracts, for example, provide proteins that are widely used for health care (as in vaccines)—but possible viral contamination is a major concern. Technology companies have found ways to tune pulses of power to destroy any DNA that may find its way into such products, without destroying the proteins. Similarly, the food handling and processing industry projects carefully controlled pulses of power to kill biological causes of spoilage without damaging the rest of the food too much.

But if we deploy all this screening and tracking technology right here at home, the ACLU will doubtless argue, aren't we stepping into a horribly Orwellian future, a future utterly devoid of any privacy? In fact, we are not, and here's why.

Most of the screening of the future will be entirely by machine, and the machines can be set up to respect a whole lot of privacy. As our pattern recognition gets better and better, more and more can be waved through the checkpoints without any human involvement at all. Most information need never be pulled out of the digital loop for human scrutiny. When you get good enough at detecting threats, then you invade privacy only when you should, and at no other time.

And even then, the surrender of privacy can remain, by and large, an opt-in choice. Nobody is forced to step through an airport metal detector, or send luggage through the CAT scanner in the basement. It's a choice that goes with stepping into an aluminum tube called an aircraft—and the same choice will probably have to come with stepping into a cement tube under the Hudson River or onto a steel-and-cement edifice that spans San Francisco Bay. Civil libertarians won't like the argument at all, but bridge and tunnel tolls already have the effect of excluding those who can't or won't pay, and government buildings already make screening a condition of entry, as do a growing number of public schools and museums. The wave-through screening systems, intended to speed passage through an otherwise resistant—properly resistant, lawfully resistant—gateway will survive the inevitable constitutional challenges.

The equally inevitable health and safety objections won't stop the new screening technologies, either. Some are indeed dangerous—airport luggage screeners have to be carefully shielded, because X rays are up in the ionizing frequencies that can tear electrons off atoms and rip molecules apart—most notably our own DNA. But despite frequent theorizing to the contrary, the lower-frequency beams don't ionize; they pack just enough punch to penetrate and reflect but not to separate

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electrons from atoms entirely. And happily, the new focus on altogether real threats appears to have made the public a good bit more skeptical of junk-science health scares.

Anyway, we really *do* want an Orwellian future—not in Manhattan, but in Kabul.

We all look for a quick end to al-Qaida, and we hope anthrax is over. And we certainly hope that a sufficiently quick, unambiguous, and violent victory in Afghanistan will impel other governments that might wish us ill to rein in their home-grown terrorists themselves and so avoid the fate the Taliban met in backing al-Qaida. Perhaps some of this will happen, but ultimately wars like this one can't really be won, in the conventional sense of the word. Terrorist "wars" will continue, in one form or another, for as long as we live.

"Pump up millimeter-wave power high enough and you can cook people or microorganisms at a distance."

Many pundits insist that technology won't win such wars; only ground troops will. They have it exactly backward. It is *only* our technology that will let us survive the enduring war against terrorism.

We are destined to fight a never-ending succession of micro-scale battles, which will require us to spread military resources across vast expanses of empty land and penetrate deep into the shadows of lives lived at the margins of human existence. *Their* conscripts dwell in those expanses and shadows. Our soldiers don't, and can't for any extended period of time. What we have instead is micro-scale technology that is both smarter and more expendable than their fanatics, that is more easily concealed and more mobile, that requires no food and sleep, and that can endure even harsher conditions.

Technology in hand today fundamentally changes the calculus of war, especially wars that in any other era would have become wars of human attrition, wars that favor the side most willing to dispatch young men into the line of fire.

The next-generation sensing technologies are far smaller, cheaper, and more powerful than today's spy satellites or SR-71 Blackbird spy plane. The old ones were fine for spying on the military-industrial complexes of nation-states. But now we have sensing technologies that bring to the battlefield abroad, and to the vast arena of civilian defense here at home, the same wizardry that transformed the mainframe computer into the Palm Pilot, the television tower into the cell phone.

Equipped with such sensors, the Predator "remote-piloted vehicle" (RPV), about the size of a pterodactyl, can see through fog, foliage, and snow, can see objects buried underground, can see and track bullets back to their source, and can shoot Hellfire missiles. The Prowler, roughly half the size, and the high-altitude (65,000 ft.) Altus boast similar capabilities. Military RPV development programs are now focused on fully functional bat-size and even butterfly-size RPVs, which have already been built. AeroVironment's electric-powered Black Widow typifies a new family of tiny fliers, with two-mile range and live color video downlink. The company is now developing a wing-flapping, dragonfly-like Microbat that weighs half an ounce, including camera and telecom downlink.

These devices and many others like them are already well past lab-bench theory; they are close to the point where they can be churned out at low cost and in large quantities, like artillery shells. Video cameras are down to lipstick-size; million-pixel deerfly-size cameras are under development. Until quite recently, the best infrared detectors were the size of a coffee can, and they strained to detect an engine's hot exhaust, but today's thimble-size units can now detect the microscopic heat difference between a red and a white stripe on an American flag from four miles out. Sensors to pick up light or X rays or millimeter waves—the same sensors that can "see" threats in airports or at the

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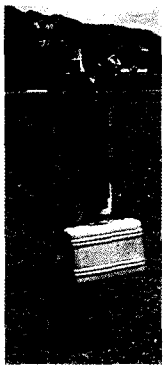

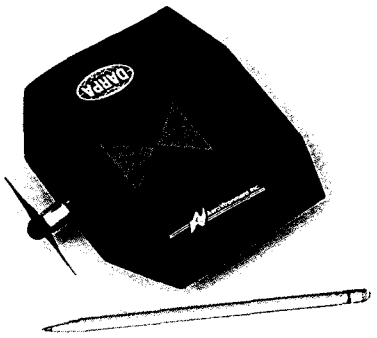

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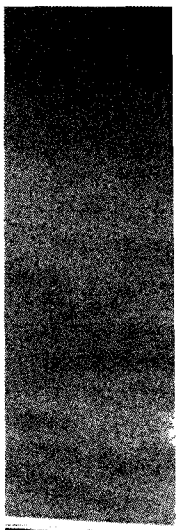

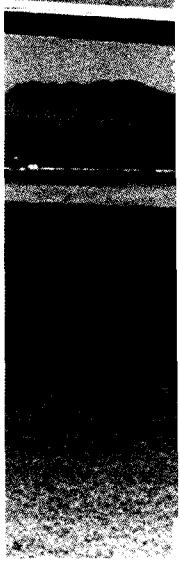

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Unmanned drone aircraft equipped with real-time TV cameras, like the bat-size plane above, or with computers, missiles, and sophisticated sensors that can see through snow and foliage, and even through the earth into caves, like the Predator (right), have changed the nature of warfare forever, as their success in Afghanistan demonstrated. Coming: butterfly-size drones, technological flies on the wall.

gateways to bridges and tunnels—are now built from the same materials as microprocessors, in the same factories, using the same core tools. Advanced radar will soon be far cheaper and more ubiquitous than binoculars and telescopes once were. It will be built from arrays of single-chip integrated transmitter-receivers, which defense contractors can incorporate by the hundreds or thousands into different platforms, weapons systems, and munitions.

Manufacturers are now etching sensors alongside microprocessor, memory, and transmitter on a single semiconductor chip, and before long they'll be able to build by the bucketload complete sensor modules—with built-in laser, memory, and CPU—that are no larger than a grain of sand. Dispersed along roadsides, hills, and trails, they will report just about anything that may interest us—the passage of vehicles, the odor of explosives, the conversations of pedestrians, the look, sound, weight, temperature, even the smell, of almost anything.

The cost of such chips is plummeting, as semiconductor costs generally do—down tenfold in the last decade, with another threefold drop projected in the next few years. Whereas yesterday's military technologies always grew more expensive, today's get progressively cheaper, even as their performance doubles and redoubles every few years.

A decade ago, most of this would still have sounded far-fetched. But today we have in place a trillion-dollar infrastructure of semiconductor and software industries, with deep roots as defense contractors. Two years ago, the Department of Defense established the Sensor Information Technology Program to develop the software that will manage distributed networks of communicating micro-sensors. Does anyone now doubt American code writers' ability to write such software? Or their motivation to do so?

Can the other side turn these same technologies against us? No chance. Building and using them requires a digital infrastructure and a digital mindset. The very notion of someone waging a "digital *jihad*" is oxymoronic. Even if our enemies steal these devices, they can't get them running, or keep them running, without developing a tech-savvy population. And in any event, it's a pretty straightforward matter to lock up digital technologies from the inside. You just build in a secure, Y2K-like bug, with whatever terminal date you like, and right on schedule the weapons will turn into plowshares, or sand itself.

However advanced our power to destroy, we obviously can't bring down the other side's skyscrapers—they don't have any. This kind of enemy never will. So our longer-term objective must be to infiltrate their homelands electronically, to the point where we can listen to and track anything that moves. We can then project destructive power precisely, judi-

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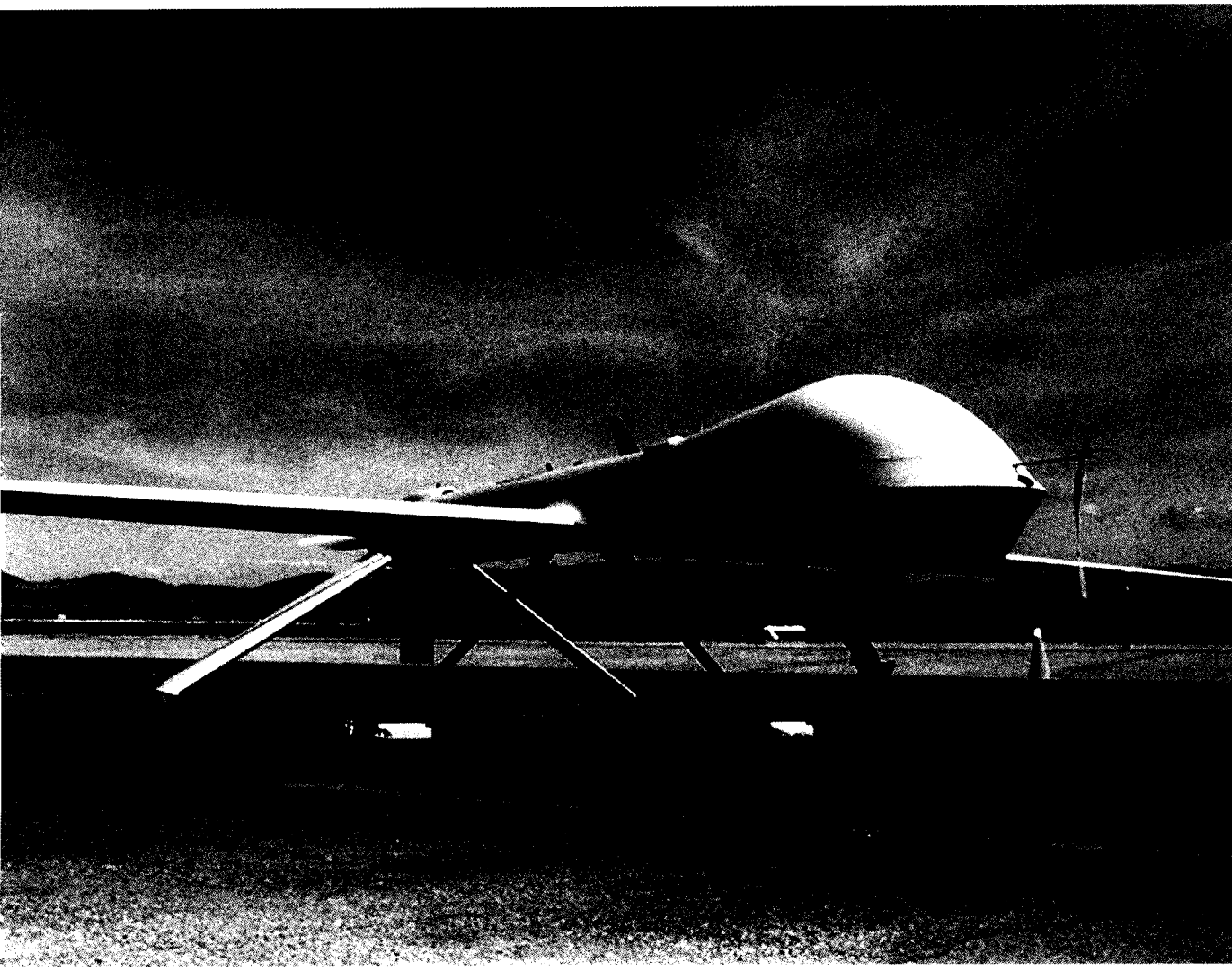

ciously, and from a safe distance—week after week, year after year, for as long as may be necessary.

Properly deployed at home, as they can be, these technologies of freedom will guarantee the physical security on which all our civil liberties ultimately depend. Properly deployed abroad, they will destroy privacy everywhere we need to destroy it.

It may seem anomalous to point to micro-scale technology as the answer to terrorists who brought down New York's tallest skyscrapers. But this is the technology that perfectly matches the enemy's character and strength. It can be replicated at very little cost; it is cheap and expendable. Small and highly mobile, it can be scattered far and wide—across Manhattan, the richest place on earth, and also across the Hindu Kush, the poorest. It can infiltrate, image, track, and ultimately destroy at the peasant-soldier's scale of things. It can win a war of attrition.

It is a horrible vision. It gives us no joy to articulate it. But at home and abroad, it will end up as their sons against our silicon. Our silicon will win.

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Don't Mess with Welfare Reform's Success

Heather Mac Donald

As the five-year time limit kicks in, and the reform measure faces renewal, Congress must reject advocates' calls to go back to the past.

The 1996 federal welfare reform law struck a massive blow against the dependency culture; Congress now has the opportunity to deliver the *coup de grâce*. In the five years since the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act (TANF) passed, the norm of non-work among poor single mothers eroded faster than anyone had dared to predict. Now Congress faces a choice as it takes up TANF's reauthorization in 2002: it can ensure another five years of startling change in welfare culture by preserving the bill's essential features—above all, the five-year time limit on welfare receipt and the work requirements—or it can halt the momentum of that change by listening to reform's enemies. The vested interests who frantically fought the 1996 law are already lining up for another battle. Lawmakers should hold the line against their demands.

TANF represented a humiliating rebuff to the poverty industry. For decades, welfare advocates had denied that a welfare culture existed. They branded as racist anyone who dared suggest that dependency had become a way of life in inner cities, or that a liberal welfare system was contributing to the family breakdown and juvenile delinquency of the urban core.

The fulminations of the advocates and their amplifiers in the press had policymakers completely cowed—until 1996. That year, Congress—emboldened by a growing national distaste for the consequences of welfare and by the increasingly persuasive argument of conservative intellectuals that those bad consequences were inevitable—bluntly declared that the web of federal poverty entitlements had indeed created a dependent class, and it made a wager. The lawmakers bet that welfare recipients stayed stuck on the dole not because there were no jobs available to them, as the advocates insisted, but because no one had ever asked them to do anything for themselves. Restore some reciprocity in the system—condition benefits on productive effort—and people would respond.

In addition, TANF made a second radical break from the welfare status quo. Welfare would now be an emergency stopgap between jobs, not a reward that government gives you for being poor for as long as you stay poor. Accordingly, each individual would be limited to five years of federal assistance over her lifetime. The norm for the poor, as for everyone else, would be work; being on welfare would be the temporary exception.

Congress's wager paid off handsomely. Asked to look for work in exchange for their welfare checks, hundreds of thousands of women found jobs. From 1996 to 1999, employment among the nation's never-married

One of the nation's many welfare reform success stories, New Yorker Sonia Pittman, 34, gets ready to go to work, after three and a half years on welfare.

Photographs by Harvey Wang

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mothers rose 40 percent. In 1992, only 38 percent of young single mothers worked; by March 2000, 60 percent of that group were employed. Another large portion of the caseload, faced with new participation requirements, simply decided that welfare was not worth the hassle. The result: a 52 percent drop in the caseload since August 1996, when TANF passed, to June 2001. Nearly 2.3 million families have left the rolls.

Sealing the reformers' triumph, poverty has plummeted in tandem with welfare use. As Ron Haskins of the Brookings Institute reports, by 1999 child poverty among female-headed households had fallen to its lowest rate ever. Most notably, black children are now better off economically than at any time on record. So much for the myth that welfare is essential to keeping people from want.

Die-hard critics of welfare reform continue to insist that the strong economy of the 1990s, not the new message about self-sufficiency, led to the striking rise in employment and the decrease in poverty among the former welfare poor. But previous booms have not produced the same effects. Child poverty fell more than twice as much in the 1990s as during the economic expansion of the 1980s, when the welfare rolls in fact rose 10 percent. Economists June O'Neill and Anne Hill estimate in a Manhattan Institute study that TANF accounts for more than half the decline in welfare participation and over 60 percent of the rise in employment among single mothers.

Throughout this remarkable period, poverty advocates agitated tirelessly to arouse grassroots opposition to the new regime. But aside from a few poorly attended demonstrations by professional protesters, no popular uprising against the work rules and time limits has developed. And that is because TANF finally brought public assistance into line with the views of the poor.

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The harshest critics of the open-ended dole and the behavior it fosters have always been the people in the waiting rooms of welfare offices. Nowhere have I heard such unapologetic denunciations of women having babies they can't support, or welfare mothers watching Jerry Springer all day, than from people in the system. And today, welfare reform's most enthusiastic backers are also welfare users.

"This is a great place!" exclaims Jesse Peraza, a wiry 25-year-old, in the Anaheim, California, welfare-to-work office. "The program now is: if you get aid, they put you to work. That's a great program, because life's not free." Jesse was recently laid off from a warehouse position for the Carl's Jr. fast-food chain. Now, the Anaheim welfare office is helping him pay the registration fee for a state insurance exam so he can start a new job. "They should've [required work] from the beginning; then a lot more people would have jobs," he observes.

Beverley Robinson was on welfare for 20 years; now she helps welfare recipients find jobs at Curtis and Associates, a welfare-to-work firm in Brooklyn. The five-year time limit finally persuaded her to enter the legal workforce, she claims, and it has done the same for the people she works with. "Some women are looking for a way to get back on their feet," she notes. "They may not know how to put together a résumé or get a job, but they are glad for the mandatory notice."

The only criticism of TANF I heard during numerous interviews with recipients and caseworkers in New York and California was that Congress did not go far enough. Although the aggregate numbers show powerful changes in the welfare population, people closest to the problem warn that the welfare culture is far from defeated. These are the experts to whom lawmakers should pay attention in debating reauthorization.

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"Too many people are still abusing the system," complains a laid-off receptionist in a Tigger T-shirt, waiting for an appointment with her caseworker in the Anaheim welfare office. "People who are able to work are still on public assistance."

Tomacka, a clerk in the downtown Los Angeles social services office, agrees that excessive loopholes remain in TANF. "It should be totally regimented," she says on a cigarette break outside the low, white county building, surrounded by Mexican vendors selling pop-music tapes and ice cream. "As soon as you apply, you should start working for your check. These parents never have to learn a trade." Like many employees of the welfare behemoth, Tomacka was herself once on public assistance, but that doesn't make her any more sympathetic to bad behavior. "People seem rebellious," she says, frowning. "They don't abide by the rules. They just do what they want to do."

"'The program now is: if you get aid, they put you to work. That's a great program, because life's not free.'"

Continuing illegitimacy also comes under severe criticism from the welfare and working poor, even though the percentage of total births that are out of wedlock has stabilized since 1996 (at a whopping 33 percent), and the percentage of black children living with married parents has ticked upward. In the view of eyewitnesses, though, not enough has changed. "People are having all kinds of kids and expecting the government to support them," fumes Dana Noriega, a 19-year-old former phone operator applying for welfare in downtown Los Angeles. A single mother herself and untroubled by the irony of her views, Noriega occasionally volunteers at a home for unwed pregnant teens. "I see it every single day: people who don't care, who have babies all day. Then they come here and they're screaming and yelling, 'Give me my money!' They cuss off people and stuff."

Welfare administrators echo these street-level assessments about the persistence of the welfare culture. "It seems like we're pushing water uphill," sighs Dick Antopol, a self-described "liberal" welfare director in Anaheim. "We're stymied by the ones we can't get to work. Eventually, maybe, we will change the culture, but not in five years."

Sonia's mother works at an East Harlem public library branch, where Sonia pays her a visit.

The behavior my recipient-informants decry—non-work, illegitimacy, refusal to follow rules, the entitlement mentality—would greatly subside if Congress tightened certain provisions and imposed a few new mandates. Doing so will require ignoring the advocates, who seek to push TANF back toward an entitlement trap. It will also require standing up to the state governors, who resisted TANF's work philosophy in 1996 and who now oppose any new federal requirements on state welfare programs as a violation of their sovereignty. Congress should firmly respond that it has a duty to ensure that federal taxpayer dollars are maximally effective in encouraging self-sufficiency.

First, lawmakers should tighten TANF's work requirement. Despite the overarching reform principle that welfare should always be conditioned on work, people can still receive benefits and easily avoid any work obligations. Thanks to current TANF rules, fewer than half of the able-bodied people still on the rolls are actually involved in work activities, which include such things as babysitting for other recipients' children or looking for a job—or working full-time at a job that pays too little to lift the recipient above the poverty level. The bill only required that 50 percent of a state's caseload be engaged in such activities by 2002, and it exempted recipients from working for their first two years on the rolls. But it also gave states a point-for-point reduction of their work-participation requirement for each percentage-point drop in their welfare rolls. If a state's rolls have dropped 25 percent, say, it will only have to ensure that 25 percent of those remaining on the rolls in 2002 are engaged in some work activity. Twenty-three states are now exempt from putting *anyone* in work

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activities, because their caseload drops wiped out their work requirements.

Congress should reaffirm the work philosophy of TANF by stiffening the requirements on states to get their remaining welfare recipients into work activities. Lawmakers should eliminate the caseload reduction credit for the future, along with the two-year grace period from work activities. Ideally, states would eventually be required to have 100 percent of their able-bodied welfare recipients in some sort of activity—a system already in place in Wisconsin. Matt Weidinger, a staff director with the House Ways and Means Committee, predicts that the governors will "light themselves on fire" if the caseload credit is taken away—because it makes their job harder—but Congress should be prepared to take the heat.

Meeting a 100 percent work-participation requirement will probably force states to create a workfare program for the most intractable part of their caseload, something most welfare administrators have shrunk from doing. Many share the prejudice of Orange County, California's, social services director, Larry Leaman, who exclaims: "The last thing we need is leaf rakers in California! In modern times, it's unthinkable." Leaman and others see workfare as demeaning to participants and a throwback to WPA days.

But why is it more demeaning to rake leaves outside Leaman's offices than to be sprawled out on one of the benches there, high on drugs—a frequent local sight? A continent away, New York City advocates have long railed against Gotham's workfare program, WEP, as belittling. But Denyse Paul, an elegant young woman who sought Medicaid and welfare after developing rheumatoid arthritis, maintains otherwise, based on firsthand experience. "WEP was good for me," she says, "I could show them I could do it." Recognizing that even government jobs programs are preferable to idleness, Congress should encourage states to create a workfare capacity, especially given the possibility that the economy will continue softening.

Besides the caseload reduction credit, the biggest reason why welfare recipients are still not all in work activities is a lamentable practice known as "partial check sanctioning." In 16 reform-reluctant states like California and New York, a mother who refuses any work activity is kept on the rolls and only docked a small portion of her welfare check. She continues to receive the vast majority of her benefits, which allegedly represents her children's portion, as well as food stamps and Medicaid. In stricter states, by contrast, if someone repeatedly refuses any kind of work, she will be cut off welfare entirely.

Partial check sanctions are the despair of welfare administrators nationwide, because once a recipient goes into partial check sanction status, the government loses all leverage over her. No matter how recalcitrant or irresponsible her behavior, there is no other sanction to apply. "You should never have a situation where you pay welfare without having a hook," complains Angelo Doti, an official with the Orange County, California, social services department. "A mom can turn her back on us. She's getting a $600 check for three children, food stamps, Medicaid—what's a hundred bucks?" Partial checks have a perverse upside for recipients, notes Doti hopelessly: "If someone is on Section 8 [federal housing vouchers], the more we cut her grant, the cheaper her housing becomes"—since Section 8 recipients are guaranteed a rent no higher than 30 percent of their income.

Not surprisingly, caseload reduction in partial check sanction states has been far weaker than in states that kick people off the rolls for major rule violations, as documented by Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation. In full check sanction states, recipients realize that they may as well get a normal job and leave the rolls, because they can't refuse work activities and still collect welfare. Intransigents get kicked off the rolls. Though they are free to reapply for welfare after a few months, most do not. In partial check sanction states, by contrast, the so-called happily sanctioned constitute a growing portion of the caseload, to the frustration of welfare directors, who see their progress against dependency grinding to a halt.

Congress should mandate full check sanctions for refusing work activities. TANF is about fostering in welfare recipients a sense of responsibility for their own self-betterment; partial sanctions violate that goal. Poverty advocates will sanctimoniously play

Sonia grew up in this East Harlem housing project, where her mother still lives.

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the "child card" in opposing full sanctions: "If you care about the children," the Children's Defense Fund's Deborah Weinstein told me, "you won't push people off the rolls." Jesse Peraza, the welfare reform enthusiast in the Anaheim welfare office, has a sharp rejoinder to Weinstein's apologetics, typical of the no-excuses thinking of many welfare recipients. "You can't just say: 'Don't send me the money; send it to my kids,'" he says reprovingly. "Having that attitude, you'll not get anywhere in life." If taxpayers in any given state want to support rule-violators indefinitely, they should do so without a federal subsidy.

A related, equally problematic category of non-work comes from the "child-only" cases. These are people who never signed up for the adult portion of the welfare check to begin with and are technically only collecting welfare for their children. Because in theory they are not themselves on welfare, they are not required to work.

Two groups of people tend to dominate the child-only category: people gaming the system to avoid work, and non-citizens. Laqia Parker fits into the first group. Wearing stiletto heels, tight leopard-skin-print pants, and lots of gold jewelry, Parker is storming the downtown Los Angeles welfare office to demand that her welfare case be reopened, even though she has repeatedly missed appointments with her caseworker. Parker collects welfare for her third child (she lost custody of the first two) and Supplemental Security Income (the greatly abused disability program for low-income non-workers) for herself, because of her mental disabilities. Could you get a job if you wanted? I asked her. "Yeah," she shrugs. Parker demonstrates close knowledge of California's welfare regime. "They're not supposed to cut off the welfare," she explains impatiently, "because I always just get it for the baby."

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As a child-only case, Parker lies outside the reach of welfare reform, because she is exempt from working.

Immigrants make up the other significant portion of child-only cases. TANF disqualified immigrants who entered the country after 1996 from receiving welfare benefits for five years after entry. There is far less to this ban than meets the eye, however. Immigrants' children born in America, even if the parents are here illegally, do get welfare, since their birth makes them automatic citizens. In Orange County, California, nearly one-quarter of the caseload consists of "child-only" welfare cases, in most of which the parents are illegal aliens. County administrators foresee a time when the children of illegal immigrants will make up their entire caseload.

Like other child-only cases, immigrant parents of welfare recipients are not required to work. Congress should require work from the able-bodied caretakers in all child-only cases, including legal immigrants. Illegal immigrants who try to put their kids on welfare should be turned in to the INS and deported.

The second large area that Congress should address when it reauthorizes TANF is illegitimacy. So far, the widely publicized message of time limits and work requirements appears to have had a welcome effect on procreative and family behavior. The proportion of black children living with married parents increased four percentage points from 1995 to 2000, to 39 percent, according to one study. (This statistic does not distinguish whether both parents are biologically related to the child, however.) Teen pregnancies and births have been falling since 1991, when states began experimenting on their own with welfare reform. The decline accelerated after TANF passed in 1996. And the percentage of total births that are illegitimate has held relatively steady in recent years, after a vertiginous 50-year climb.

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The question now is whether to declare victory and continue the welfare reform status quo, or to take on family formation directly. Arguing for business as usual are most county welfare directors and state governors. The welfare administrators point out that, although they admittedly ignored TANF's injunction to increase marriage and decrease illegitimacy—goals that they regarded as intrusive—procreative trends improved, anyway. That improvement occurred because they focused their efforts on the work program, they say, which made welfare less attractive and thus discouraged women from having children out of wedlock. It would be foolish, they argue, for Congress to mandate marriage programs, because no one has evidence that any social therapy program actually works.

"County administrators foresee a time when the children of illegal immigrants will be their entire caseload."

Leading the charge for a more activist approach to family formation are Robert Rector and Patrick Fagan of the Heritage Foundation, along with other conservative and a few liberal analysts. If we merely declare victory over illegitimacy now, they say, we'd consign millions of children to living with single parents, an arrangement shown to increase delinquency, truancy, foster-care placement, teen parenthood, and poverty. Since government already spends billions on the consequences of illegitimacy, these conservative activists say, why not divert a small fraction of that money to preventing family breakdown in the first place? Rector and Fagan propose allocating 10 percent of TANF dollars, or $1.5 billion annually, to such initiatives as marriage education in inner-city schools, mentoring for young couples, and a public ad campaign extolling the benefits of married parents for children. A new federal office would oversee the effort and measure the results.

It is impossible to disagree with the urgency motivating Rector and Fagan's proposals. A leveling off or even a slow decline in the out-of-wedlock birthrate is nothing to be cheerful about, when a deplorable 33 percent of children nationally, and over twice as many black children, are still being born into households that put them at high risk for social failure. Moreover, without a radical increase in two-parent families, the rise in welfare mothers' workforce participation will eventually slow significantly. States are already experiencing great difficulties keeping their newly employed single mothers in jobs, because single mothers face huge demands on their time from their children. The best way to improve their job stability and economic prospects is through marriage, not through the work-support programs that states are desperately cobbling together to help them cope.

But there are good reasons to hesitate before embarking on a government effort to re-create the traditional family, however critical that goal is to child well-being and a more civil society. Charging the federal government with the task of increasing the marriage rate will spawn a new social services industry teeming with hucksters. Most existing marriage and relationship-skills curricula for high schools feature a panoply of pop-psychological nonsense about "I-scripts vs. you-scripts," "anger rituals," "personal empowerment skills," and "love styles," as the Institute for American Values has devastatingly reported.

Not only are such spurious therapies nauseating in their own right, but they misdiagnose the disease. Marriage has not broken down because people have suddenly forgotten "communication scripts for seeking permission to vent," as taught by the teen relationship course, PEERS PAIRS. Marriage has broken down because the taboos against illegitimacy and divorce have fallen before American culture's unremitting drive for individual self-fulfillment.

There is a certain Babes-in-the-Woods quality to proposals for marriage classes in the inner city. As sociologists Orlando Patterson and Kathryn Edin have shown, black male-female relations, especially among the poor, are in a state of crisis, despite the recent uptick in marriage. Mistrust, anger,

Sonia's trophy-winning teenage son, Julius, is away at prep school on scholarship.

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and abuse are endemic. When I ask Beverley Robinson, the Brooklyn welfare caseworker, about relations between the sexes among her clients, she rolls her eyes and chuckles: "Oh, chile, we could talk!" The men degrade the women for being a "welfare mother," she says, and then "the next thing you know, two days before check day, they're sweet-talking her." The men have babies with the women, then get arrested and leave them, Beverley explains. When they're on the welfare budget, they drink and drug with the money.

Why don't the men get a job? I ask. She shakes her head. "They're not working," she says, "and their attitude is: 'Why the hell should I get a job? I get Medicaid.' A lot of women tell me: 'It's more productive to be single. If I have a man underfoot, waiting for my check, it won't push me into a positive mode.'"

It's going to take more than marriage counselors to defuse these emotional land mines. Before government turns to therapists and relationship experts, it should make use of a far more powerful tool for strengthening marriage that is already in its possession: schooling. The schools could create more marriageable and marrying men than any number of counselors if they rededicated themselves to their civilizing mission. If teachers and principals insisted on courtesy, promptness, and the performance of obligations, and if they punished students who violated these expectations, society would be far along in re-creating the urban two-parent family. Students—especially boys—who have been trained to respect others will more likely end up as good husbands, fathers, and employees than students allowed to run wild in the typical inner-city school.

If Congress decides to legislate around the marriage issue, it should do so with the lightest possible touch. Its greatest effort should be through the bully pulpit. Public figures should affirm the importance of married parents for children; public service announcements, starring celebrities, should back up the message. Politicians should call on a wide range of community leaders, such as clergymen, to start talking about marriage and children—even without a government contract to do so.

Whether the country's elites, including those in government, will be willing to curb their appetite for divorce—a precondition for speaking out non-hypocritically on children's need for married parents—is sadly a doubtful prospect. Ironically, many among the welfare poor have a far more judgmental attitude toward out-of-wedlock child-rearing than do the elites, but they lack the determination to act on those and other conservative values, as sociologist Lawrence Mead writes in his upcoming book. A bully-pulpit campaign for marriage and responsibility would therefore find fertile ground where it is most needed.

As for organized marriage-promotion programs, ideally only private philanthropy would fund them, because taxpayer dollars should be spent only on things we know how to do, like build bridges and maintain public safety. But if government money is to be spent on programs promoting marriage, it should be spent only in tightly evaluated, well-designed demonstration projects before lawmakers pass any general mandate. And the more therapists a proposal entails, the poorer its chances for funding should be. In 1996, TANF committed $50 million a year to abstinence education; the resulting programs have not yet been evaluated. But it doesn't take an evaluation to know that any federal dollars going to sex education should be used to teach that procreation and child-rearing should occur only within marriage.

Congress should also reduce the so-called marriage penalties in a host of programs, from the Earned Income Tax Credit to the TANF two-parent work obligations. It should give married couples priority for government benefits; today, the opposite is usually the case.

Strengthening TANF in the ways I've suggested will be difficult enough, given the opposition of the governors to additional mandates and of the advocates to anything smacking of greater personal responsibility. But, in addition, welfare advocates are already beating the drums for their own slate of changes, which Congress will have to defeat roundly if it wants to preserve the progress already made.

Sonia has already had two raises at her job at the Equinox health-club chain's headquarters.

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You'd expect that by now the poverty industry would have slunk out of sight, its tail between its legs. Its apocalyptic warnings about surging homelessness, starvation, and child abuse if Congress were to ask welfare recipients to work have proven spectacularly wrong. But instead of honorably disappearing, the advocates are gearing up for another assault. They are motivated by one central yearning: to turn welfare back into an unconditional right. "The end of the welfare entitlement continues to trouble us," says Deborah Weinstein of the Children's Defense Fund.

The advocates' first line of attack will be against time limits, which send the message to recipients—unacceptably, from the advocates' point of view—that they are ultimately responsible for their own support. Already the liberal press is filled with anecdotes of well-intentioned recipients whom the cutoff will unfairly harm. Either lift the five-year time limit on welfare receipt entirely, say the poverty promoters, or stop the clock whenever a recipient is working some part of the week—25 hours is now considered "full-time."

Congress must hold firm in keeping the time limit intact. Nothing so focused the mind of welfare recipients as the five-year cutoff. To alter the message now would jeopardize the momentum of change in the welfare culture.

TANF gave states the option of exempting 20 percent of their caseload from the five-year time limit—a large enough exemption to cover people legitimately unable to work, even during a prolonged recession. Most people currently facing the time limit have been resisting the imperative to work for the last five years, while the economy was going gangbusters. It's a little late now to argue that there are no jobs. Many states panicked when the time limits grew near and handed out blanket

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exemptions; there is no evidence that people who have complied with all the job-search requirements are in danger of being kicked off the rolls. Other states, like New York, have created an entirely state-funded duplicate of welfare for the malingerers.

Pausing the time-limit clock for women who are working but still collecting welfare (because their wages are low) would also defeat the purpose of welfare reform. Welfare is not an income supplement; it is a safety net for people temporarily unable to support themselves. Allowing recipients to collect benefits indefinitely as long as they stay in a low-wage job returns welfare to lifelong entitlement status. The federal and state governments already provide generous earnings supplements through the Earned Income Tax Credit. Welfare should remain a stopgap measure.

In addition to fighting against time limits, the welfare rights lobby will also demand that education count toward TANF's work requirements. But it was precisely the emphasis on work, rather than disembodied training, that distinguished TANF from previous reform efforts and led to its success. In fact, despite the representations of the advocates, TANF is already sufficiently flexible to allow job-related education or training if it is in the best interests of a recipient. The advocates' claim that TANF does not provide enough opportunity for self-improvement is ultimately aimed at torpedoing the work requirements.

The welfare promoters have a host of additional demands that would all move the system back toward a no-obligation trap. Congress must be particularly vigilant against two in particular: the drive to get immigrants back on welfare and the push to make "poverty reduction" a federal TANF goal.

The only thing noteworthy about TANF's provision disqualifying recent immigrants from welfare was that it was necessary at all. Immigrant sponsors must swear under oath that the immigrant will not become a "public charge" and accept liability if he does. Signing up for welfare upon arrival in the country, as many immigrants did before 1996, is a gross violation of the "public charge" promise. But until 1996, no one dared point out the contradiction. It remains one, however. Immigrants should remain ineligible for welfare for at least five years and unless they become citizens. Supporters of immigration have always argued that it adds ambitious and enterprising people to the workforce, but the argument only holds true if there is no entitlement to welfare to attract the dependent rather than the industrious.

The welfarists also want to impose on states the goal of reducing poverty—some proposals call for at least a 50 percent reduction in child poverty over the next ten years. This proposal grows from wounded self-esteem. Having disastrously predicted skyrocketing poverty from welfare reform, the welfarists have hurriedly created a different benchmark for judging its success. Their new rap against TANF is that, though poverty fell substantially, it did not fall quickly enough. But this is merely to change the subject to distract attention from how completely the drop in poverty discredits their entire argument. Moreover, even had poverty "merely" remained constant while people moved from welfare to work, welfare reform could have been called a success, since those ex-welfare families would be on the road from dependency to self-reliance, not starving on a grate, as the advocates had predicted.

The poverty-reduction plank would only add useless new social programs to the federal budget. (Of course, the advocates are unwilling to promote the most efficient program for raising family income: marriage.) Ultimately, reducing poverty is an individual's responsibility. The government may rightly provide a safety net for people permanently or temporarily unable to care for themselves, and it should of course provide the necessary conditions for self-help, such as rigorous schools and safe neighborhoods. But it cannot create the self-discipline needed to move up the economic ladder.

TANF brought a 30-year experiment in social engineering to an end. The politicians and protesters who created no-obligation welfare in the 1960s believed that the best way to help the poor—and, equally important, to demonstrate their own compassion—was to exempt them from the rules that the rest of society lives by. In 1996, Congress finally acknowledged the devastation this foolish experiment caused. It should now build on the progress made since then by strengthening TANF's architecture for self-sufficiency.

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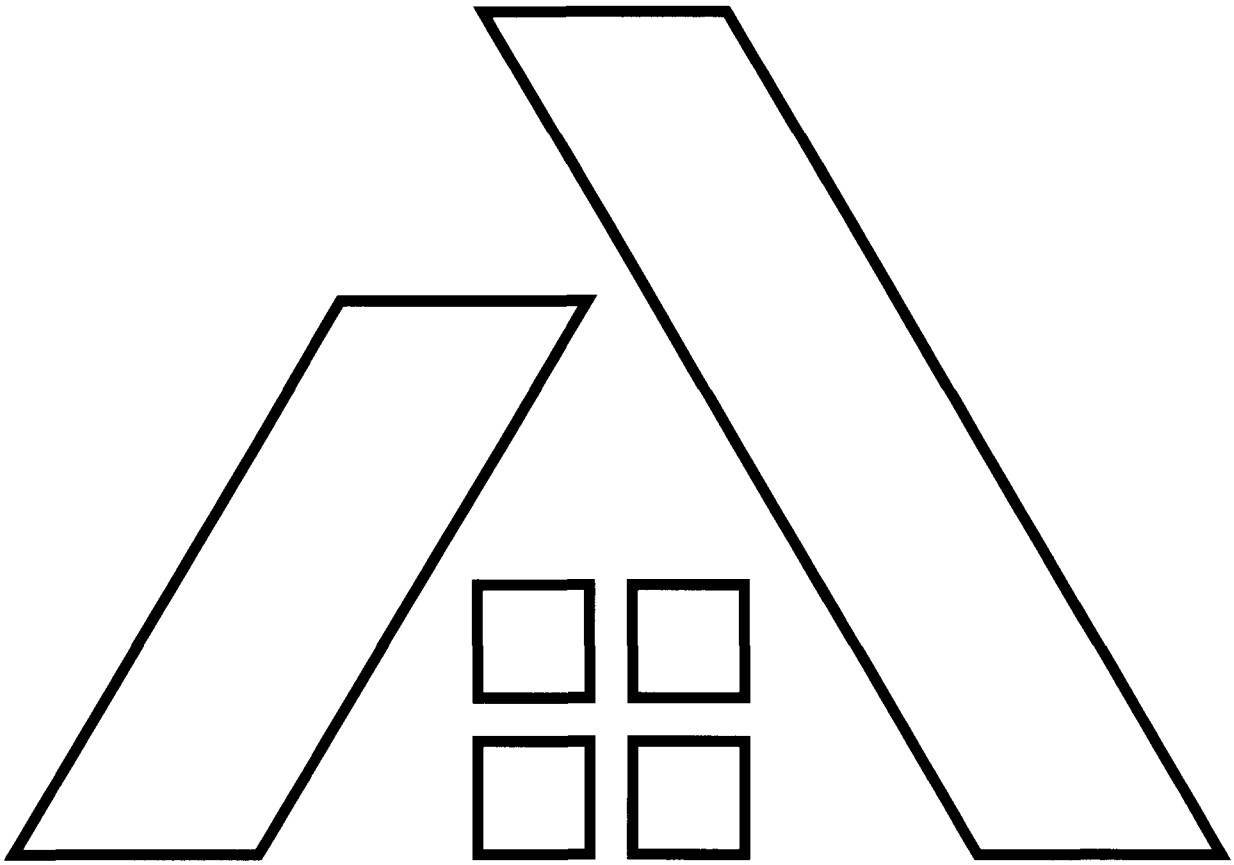

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Why We Don't Marry

The cultural trends that gave us enlightenment and freedom now give us cohabitation and divorce.

James Q. Wilson

Everyone knows that the rising proportion of women who bear and raise children out of wedlock has greatly weakened the American family system. This phenomenon, once thought limited to African Americans, now affects whites as well, so much so that the rate at which white children are born to an unmarried mother is now as high as the rate for black children in the mid-1960s, when Daniel Patrick Moynihan issued his famous report on the Negro family. For whites the rate is one-fifth; for blacks it is over one-half.

Almost everyone—a few retrograde scholars excepted—agrees that children in mother-only homes suffer harmful consequences: the best studies show that these youngsters are more likely than those in two-parent families to be suspended from school, have emotional problems, become delinquent, suffer from abuse, and take drugs. Some of these problems may arise from the economic circumstances of these one-parent families, but the best studies, such as those by Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, show that low income can explain, at most, about half of the differences between single-parent and two-parent families. The rest of the difference is explained by a mother living without a husband.

And even the income explanation is a bit misleading, because single moms, by virtue of being single, are more likely to be poor than are married moms. Now that our social security and pension systems have dramatically reduced poverty among the elderly, growing up with only one parent has dramatically increased poverty among children. In this country we have managed to shift poverty from old folks to young folks. Former Clinton advisor William Galston sums up the matter this way: you need only do three things in this country to avoid poverty—finish high school, marry before having a child, and marry after the age of 20. Only 8 percent of the families who do this are poor; 79 percent of those who fail to do this are poor.

This pattern of children being raised by single parents is now a leading feature of the social life of almost all English-speaking countries and some European ones. The illegitimacy ratio in the late 1990s was 33 percent for the United States, 31 percent for Canada, and 38 percent for the United Kingdom.

Now, not all children born out of wedlock are raised by a single mother. Some, especially in Sweden, are raised by a man and woman who, though living together, are not married; others are raised by a mother who gets married

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In the Middle Ages, marriage was a holy sacrament, . . .

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GIANNI DAGLI ORTI/CORBIS

. . . but in the Age of Enlightenment, it became a contract.

shortly after the birth. Nevertheless, there has been a sharp increase in children who are not only born out of wedlock but are raised without a father. In the United States, the percentage of children living with an unmarried mother has tripled since 1960 and more than doubled since 1970. In England, 22 percent of all children under the age of 16 are living with only one parent, a rate three times higher than in 1971.

Why has this happened? There are two possible explanations to consider: money and culture.

Money readily comes to mind. If a welfare system pays unmarried mothers enough to have their own apartment, some women will prefer babies to husbands. When government subsidizes something, we get more of it. But for many years, American scholars discounted this possibility. Since the amount of welfare paid per mother had declined in inflation-adjusted terms, and since the amount paid in each state showed no correlation with each state's illegitimacy rate, surely money could not have caused the increase in out-of-wedlock births.

This view dominated scholarly discussions until the 1990s. But there are three arguments against it. First, the inflation-adjusted value of welfare benefits was not the key factor. What counted was the inflation-adjusted value of *all* the benefits an unmarried mother might receive—not only welfare, but also food stamps, public housing, and Medicaid. By adding these in, welfare kept up with inflation.

Second, what counted was not how much money each state paid out, but how much it paid compared with the cost of living in that state. As Charles Murray pointed out, the benefits for a woman in New Orleans ($654 a month) and those for one in San Francisco ($867 a month) made nearly identical contributions to the cost of living, because in New Orleans it cost about two-thirds as much to live as it did in San Francisco.

Third, comparing single-parent families and average spending levels neglects the real issue: how attractive is welfare to a low-income unmarried woman in a given locality? When economist Mark Rosenzweig asked this question of women who are

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part of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth—a panel study of people that has been going on since 1979—he found that a 10 percent increase in welfare benefits made the chances that a poor young woman would have a baby out of wedlock before the age of 22 go up by 12 percent. And this was true for whites as well as blacks. Soon other scholars were confirming Rosenzweig's findings. Welfare made a difference.

But how big a difference? AFDC began in 1935, but by 1960 only 4 percent of the children getting welfare had a mother who had never been married; the rest had mothers who were widows or had been separated from their husbands. By 1996 that had changed dramatically: now approximately two-thirds of welfare children had an unmarried mom, and hardly any were the offspring of widows.

Why this change? At least for blacks, one well-known explanation has been offered: men did not marry because there were no jobs for them in the big cities. As manufacturing employment sharply declined in the central cities, William Julius Wilson has argued, blacks were unable to move to the suburbs as fast as the jobs. The unemployed males left behind are not very attractive as prospective husbands to the women they know, and so more and more black women do without marriage.

The argument has not withstood scholarly criticism. First, Mexican Americans, especially illegal immigrants, live in the central city also, but the absence of good jobs has not mattered, even though many Mexicans are poorer than blacks, speak English badly, and if undocumented cannot get good jobs. Nevertheless, the rate of out-of-wedlock births is much lower among these immigrants than it is among African Americans, as W. J. Wilson acknowledges.

Second, Christopher Jencks has shown that there has been as sharp a decline in marriage among employed black men as among unemployed ones, and that the supply of employed blacks is large enough to provide husbands for almost all unmarried black mothers. For these people, as Jencks concludes, "marriage must . . . have been losing its charms for non-economic reasons."

Moreover, the argument that single-parent families have increased because black men have not been able to move to wherever factory jobs can be found does not explain why such families have grown so rapidly among whites, for whom moving around a city should be no problem. For these whites—and I suspect for many blacks as well—there must be another explanation.

To explain the staggering increase in unmarried mothers, we must turn to culture. In this context, what I mean by culture is simply that being an unmarried mother and living on welfare has lost its stigma. At one time living on the dole was shameful; now it is much less so. As this may not be obvious to some people, let me add some facts that will support it.

Women in rural communities who go on welfare leave it much sooner than the same kind of women who take welfare in big cities, and this is true for both whites and blacks and regardless of the size of their families. The studies that show this outcome offer a simple explanation for it. In a small town, everyone knows who is on welfare, and welfare recipients do not have many friends in the same situation with whom they can associate. But in a big city, welfare recipients are not known to everyone, and each one can easily associate with other women living the same way. In the small town, welfare recipients tell interviewers the same story: "I always felt like I was being watched"; "they treat us like welfare cattle"; people "make nasty comments." But in a big city, recipients had a different story: Everyone "is in the same boat I am"; people "don't look down on you."

American courts have made clear that welfare laws cannot be used to enforce stigma. When Alabama tried in 1960 to deny welfare to an unmarried woman who was living with a man who was not her husband, the U.S. Supreme Court objected. Immorality, it implied, was an outdated notion. The states have no right to limit welfare to a "worthy person," and welfare belongs to the child, not the mother. If the state is concerned about immorality, it will have to rehabilitate the women by other means.

How did stigma get weakened by practice and undercut by law, when Americans—no less than

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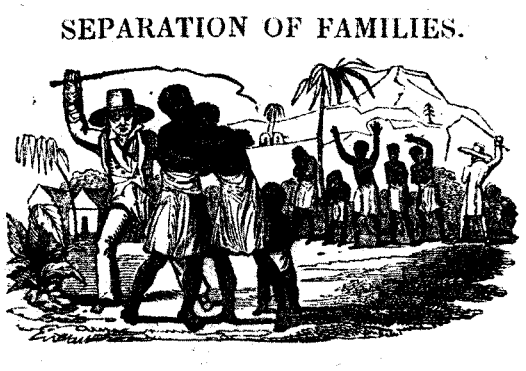
Brits, Canadians, and Australians—favor marriage and are skeptical of welfare?

Let me suggest that beneath the popular support for marriage there has slowly developed, almost unnoticed, a subversion of it, which can be summarized this way: whereas marriage was once thought to be about a social union, it is now about personal preferences. Formerly, law and opinion enforced the desirability of marriage without asking what went on in that union; today, law and opinion enforce the desirability of personal happiness without worrying much about maintaining a formal relationship. Marriage was once a sacrament, then it became a contract, and now it is an arrangement. Once religion provided the sacrament, then the law enforced the contract, and now personal preferences define the arrangement.



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Given the horrors of slavery, no one can argue that it did not do lasting damage to the black family.

The cultural change that made this happen was the same one that gave us science, technology, freedom, and capitalism: the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment—that extraordinary intellectual development that began in eighteenth-century England, Scotland, Holland, and Germany—made human reason the measure of all things, throwing off ancient rules if they fell short. What the king once ordered, what bishops once enforced, what tradition once required was to be set aside in the name of scientific knowledge and personal self-discovery. The Enlightenment's great spokesmen were David Hume, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant; its greatest accomplishment was the creation of the United States of America.

I am a great admirer of the Enlightenment. But it entailed costs. I take great pride in the vast expansion in human freedom that the Enlightenment conferred on so many people, but I also know that the Enlightenment spent little time worrying about those cultural habits that make freedom meaningful and constructive. The family was one of these.

It was in the world most affected by the Enlightenment that we find both its good and bad legacies. There we encounter both remarkable science and personal self-indulgence. There we find human freedom and high rates of crime. There we find democratic governments and frequent divorces. There we find regimes concerned about the poor and a proliferation of single-parent families.

Single-parent families are most common in those nations—England, America, Canada, Australia, France, the Netherlands—where the Enlightenment had its greatest effect. Such families are far less common in Italy, Spain, Eastern Europe, Russia, the Middle East, China, and Japan. It was in the enlightened nations that nuclear rather than extended families became common, that individual consent and not clan control was the basis of a marriage contract, and that divorce first became legal.

But why did the Enlightenment have its greatest effect on the English-speaking world and on northwestern Europe? I think it was because life in those countries had for so long been arranged in ways that provided fertile ground in which human reason and personal freedom could take root and prosper. Alan Macfarlane, the great English anthropologist, has shown that land in England was individually owned as far back as the thirteenth century and possibly even earlier. There, and in similar countries in northwestern Europe, land ownership had established the basis for a slow assertion of human rights and legal defenses. If you own the land, you have a right to keep, sell, or bequeath it, and you have access to courts that will defend those rights and, in defending them, will slowly add more rights.

Marriage depended on land. Until a young man inherited or bought a piece of property, he was in no position to take a wife. The rule was: no land, no

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marriage. As a result, English men and women married at a much older age than was true elsewhere. But with the rise of cities and the growth of industrialism, that began to change. Now a man and a woman, already defined by rights that were centuries old, could marry on an income, not on a farm, and so they married at a younger age.

English couples could get married on the basis of their individual consent, without obtaining the formal approval of their parents, though parents still might try to influence these decisions, and among the landed aristocracy such influence was often decisive. But for most people, the old rule of the Roman Catholic church was in force: no marriage was legitimate unless the man and woman freely consented. That rule found its widest observance in countries like England, where individual land ownership and personal rights reinforced it.

In Eastern Europe, to say nothing of the Middle and Far East, a different culture had been created out of a different system for owning land. In many parts of these regions, land lay in the control of families and clans. No individual owned it, and no individual could sell or bequeath it. One man might run the farm, but he did so not on the basis of ownership, but because of his seniority or skill, with the land itself remaining the property of an extended family.

In these places—where courts, unimportant in matters of real estate, tended to be unimportant in other respects as well—human rights were less likely to develop. In clan-based regimes, families often decided what man a woman might marry, and, since family labor worked family-owned land, men and women married at a young age, in hopes of adding many children to the common labor force.

The Enlightenment did not change the family immediately, because everyone took family life for granted. The most important Enlightenment thinkers assumed marriage and denounced divorce. That assumption—and in time that denunciation—slowly lost force, as people gradually experienced the widening of human freedom.

The laws, until well into the twentieth century, made it crystal clear that, though a child might be conceived by an unmarried couple, once born it had to have two parents. There was no provision for the state to pay for a single-parent child, and public opinion strongly and unanimously endorsed that policy.

In our free-choice era, marriage is an arrangement.

But by the end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, policies changed, and then, slowly, opinion changed. Two things precipitated the change: first, a compassionate desire to help needy children; and second, a determination to end the legal burdens under which women suffered. The first was a powerful force, especially since the aid to needy children was designed to help those who had lost their fathers owing to wars or accidents, as so many did as a consequence of the First World War and of industrial or mining accidents. Slowly, however, a needy child was redefined to include those of any mother without a husband, and not just any who had become a widow.

The emancipation of women was also a desirable process. In America and England, nineteenth-century women already had more rights than those in most of Europe, but when married they still could not easily own property, file for a divorce, or conduct their own affairs. By the 1920s most of these restrictions had ended, and once women got the vote, there was no chance of these limitations ever being reinstated.

We should therefore not be surprised that the twenties were an enthusiastic display of unchaperoned dating, provocative dress, and exhibitionist behavior. Had it not been for a time-out imposed by the Great Depression and the Second World War, we would no longer be referring to the sixties as an era of self-indulgence; we would be talking about the legacy of the twenties.

The sixties reinstated trends begun half a century earlier, but now without effective opposition. No-fault divorce laws were passed throughout most of the West, the pill and liberalized abortion laws dramatically reduced the chances of unwanted pregnancies, and popular entertainment focused on pleasing the young.

As a result, family law, in Carl Schneider's term, lost its moral basis. It was easier to get out of a marriage than a mortgage. This change in culture was made crystal clear by court decisions. At the end of

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the nineteenth century, the Supreme Court referred to marriage as a "holy estate" and a "sacred obligation." By 1965 the same court described marriage as "an association of two individuals."

People still value marriage; but it is only that value—and very little social pressure or legal obligation—that sustains it.

But there is another part of the cultural argument, and it goes to the question of why African Americans have such high rates of mother-only families. When black scholars addressed this question, as did W. E. B. DuBois in 1908 and E. Franklin Frazier in 1939, they argued that slavery had weakened the black family. When Daniel Patrick Moynihan repeated this argument in 1965, he was denounced for "blaming the victim."

An intense scholarly effort to show that slavery did little harm to African-American families followed that denunciation; instead, what really hurt them was migrating to big cities where they encountered racism and oppression.

It was an astonishing argument. Slavery, a vast and cruel system of organized repression that, for over two centuries, denied to blacks the right to marry, vote, sue, own property, or take an oath; that withheld from them the proceeds of their own labor; that sold them and their children on the auction block; that exposed them to brutal and unjust punishment: all this misery had little or no effect on family life, but moving as free people to a big city did. To state the argument is to refute it.

But since some people take academic nonsense seriously, let me add that we now know, thanks to such scholars as Orlando Patterson, Steven Ruggles, and Brenda E. Stevenson, that this argument was empirically wrong. The scholars who made it committed some errors. In calculating what percentage of black mothers had husbands, they accepted many women's claims that they were widows, when we now know that such claims were often lies, designed to conceal that the respondents had never been married. In figuring out what proportion of slaves were married, these scholars focused on large plantations, where the chance of having a spouse was high, instead of on small ones, where most slaves lived, and where the chance of having a spouse was low. On these small farms, only about one-fifth of the slaves lived in a nuclear household.

After slavery ended, sharecropping took its place. For the family, this was often no great improvement. It meant that it was very difficult for a black man to own property and thus hard for him to provide for the progress of his children or bequeath to them a financial start in life. Being a tenant farmer also meant that he needed help on the land, and so he often had many children, despite the fact that, without owning the land, he could not provide for their future.

The legacy of this sad history is twofold. First, generations of slaves grew up without having a family, or without having one that had any social and cultural meaning. Second, black boys grew up aware that their fathers were often absent or were sexually active with other women, giving the boys poor role models for marriage. Today, studies show that the African-American boys most likely to find jobs are those who reject, rather than emulate, their fathers; whereas for white boys, those most likely to find work are those who admire their fathers.

What is astonishing today is that so many African Americans are married and lead happy and productive lives. This is an extraordinary accomplishment, of which everyone should be proud. But it is an accomplishment limited to only about half of all black families, and white families seem to be working hard to catch up.

But there remains at least one more puzzle to solve. Culture has shaped how we produce and raise children, but that culture surely had its greatest impact on how educated people think. Yet the problem of weak, single-parent families is greatest among the least educated people. Why should a culture that is so powerfully shaped by upper-middle-class beliefs have so profound an effect on poor people? If some intellectuals have devalued marriage, why should ordinary people do so? If white culture has weakened marriage, why should black culture follow suit?

I suspect that the answer may be found in Myron Magnet's book *The Dream and the Nightmare*. When the haves remake a culture, the people who pay the

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price are the have-nots. Let me restate his argument with my own metaphor. Imagine a game of crack-the-whip, in which a line of children, holding hands, starts running in a circle. The first few children have no problem keeping up, but near the end of the line the last few must run so fast that many fall down. Those children who did not begin the turning suffer most from the turn.

There are countless examples of our cultural crack-the-whip. Heroin and cocaine use started among elites and then spread down the social scale. When the elites wanted to stop, they could hire doctors and therapists; when the poor wanted to stop, they could not hire anybody. The elites endorsed community-based centers to treat mental illness, and so mental hospitals were closed down. The elites hired psychiatrists; the poor slept on the streets. People who practiced contraception endorsed loose sexuality in writing and movies; the poor practiced loose sexuality without contraception. Divorce is more common among the affluent than the poor. The latter, who can't afford divorce, deal with unhappy marriages by not getting married in the first place. My only trivial quarrel with Magnet is that I believe these changes began a century ago and even then built on more profound changes that date back centuries.

"The best way for a culture to restore itself is for it to be rebuilt from the bottom up by personal decisions."

Now you probably expect me to tell you what we can do about this, but if you believe, as I do, in the power of culture, you will realize that there is very little one can do. As a University of Chicago professor once put it, if you succeed in explaining why something is so, you have probably succeeded in explaining why it must be so. He implied what is in fact often the case: change is very hard.

The remarkable fact is that today so many Americans value marriage, get married, and want their children to marry. Many often cohabit, but when a child arrives most get married. The ones who don't make their children suffer. But to many people the future means more cohabitation—more "relationships"—and fewer marriages. Their goal is Sweden, where marriage is slowly going out of style.

The difficulty with cohabitation as opposed to marriage has been brilliantly laid out by Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher in their book *The Case for Marriage*. In it they show that married people, especially men, benefit greatly from marriage: they are healthier, live longer, and are less depressed. But many young men today have not absorbed that lesson. They act as if sex is more important than marriage, worry more about scoring than dating, and are rewarded by their buddies when they can make it with a lot of young women. To them, marriage is at best a long-term benefit, while sex is an immediate preoccupation. This fact supplies us with a sober lesson: the sexual revolution—one that began nearly a century ago but was greatly hastened by the 1960s—was supposed to help make men and women equal. Instead it has helped men, while leaving many women unmarried spectators watching *Sex and the City* on HBO.

One could imagine an effort to change our culture, but one must recognize that there are many aspects of it that no one, least of all I, wants to change. We do not want fewer freedoms or less democracy. Most of us, myself included, do not want to change any of the gains women have made in establishing their moral and legal standing as independent actors with all the rights that men once enjoyed alone. We can talk about tighter divorce laws, but it is not easy to design one that both protects people from ending a marriage too quickly with an easy divorce and at the same time makes divorce for a good cause readily available.

The right and best way for a culture to restore itself is for it to be rebuilt, not from the top down by government policies, but from the bottom up by personal decisions. On the side of that effort, we can find churches—or at least many of them—and the common experience of adults that the essence of marriage is not sex, or money, or even children: it is commitment.

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Gotham Needs a GOP

Michael Bloomberg's victory highlights New York City's need for two parties, not one or none.

Steven Malanga

No one could be more astonished by Republican Michael Bloomberg's stunning come-from-behind victory in the New York mayor's race than the New York City and New York State Republican Party organizations, which backed the recently converted Democrat chiefly because he offered to fund his own campaign. Too bad GOP officials made so little effort in the rest of the city elections, running no candidates for the other citywide offices and only a few ill-supported ones in the City Council races. Maybe they might have discovered that Bloomberg's post–September 11 message of no new taxes, a free-market solution to the rebuilding of downtown Manhattan, and a promise to continue Rudy Giuliani's initiatives on law and order—a Republican message, in other words—actually can attract widespread support in New York. They might have discovered, if they had bestirred themselves, that New York doesn't *have* to be Moscow-on-the-Hudson but could become a normal two-party town like most of America.

That Bloomberg—competent, plausible, and rich—came forth so that voters who favor fiscal discipline and activist policing could elect him was a sheer fluke. If, in spite of his lifelong liberalism, he turns out to govern in accordance with the beliefs of those who voted for him, that too will be a fluke and in any event can't be foreseen as yet. And if he does try to govern as a Republican, he will face a hostile left-wing City Council with almost no allies inside government as he attempts the difficult task of rebuilding New York.

After two Giuliani victories followed by Bloomberg's election, no one can claim that key Republican ideas are nonstarters in New York. And so the Republican Party's failure to develop and support a full slate of candidates to represent and battle for these positions is all the more egregious. The moribund condition of Gotham's GOP is a huge disservice to voters holding these beliefs. And it is a disservice to all New Yorkers, Republicans and Democrats alike: for without a credible two-party system, providing genuine political competition and the clash of ideas it entails, special interests almost inevitably will prevail against the common good.

So can anything bring the party back to life?

When Giuliani first ran for mayor in 1989, Gotham's GOP, a minority party ever since notables like Horace Greeley founded it in 1854, was already on life support—discredited and nearly extinguished by the famously disastrous reign of Republican-Liberal John Lindsay. So feeble had Lindsay left it that in 1977, Republican mayoral candidate Roy Goodman had collected a risible 4.5 percent of the vote, and by the early 1980s, Democrats held Gracie Mansion, every seat on the City Council, and every borough presidency.

It was Giuliani himself who galvanized the local GOP back to a semblance of life with his 1989 run for mayor. With crime soaring and the economy sinking, tough prosecutor Giuliani's crime-busting message resonated. Although David Dinkins won, Giuliani's unexpectedly strong showing helped spur a bevy of new GOP candidates to run for City Council in 1991—the year New York lost an astounding 191,000 jobs and suffered more than 2,000 murders. Though until then Republicans had won only a single municipal office since 1983, these new challengers wrested four council seats away from the

Illustrations by Arnold Roth

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Democrats. When Giuliani upset Dinkins two years later and successfully slashed crime and reined in the city's runaway budget with amazing speed, the Republican future began to look rosier.

"Back then," recalls former City Council minority leader Alfred Cerullo, "people looked to us as the only way to change things in the city. As things got worse, our prospects got better."

Sure enough, Giuliani's agenda of activist policing, tax cuts, and welfare reform sparked a broad-based revival that gave a new generation of New Yorkers a stake in the city's restored prosperity. New York again became a place where professionals and hardworking middle-class families wanted to be. Rather than facing an exodus of talent, as it did during the crime-ridden early 1990s, Gotham began to attract technology entrepreneurs, M.B.A.s flocking to Wall Street, and movie and recording stars, who reinvigorated its main business districts, bought up co-ops, sparked construction of new apartment buildings, and gentrified faded residential areas.

A new generation of successful small businesses sprang up, too, especially in the outer boroughs, where steep reductions in crime allowed redevelopment of neighborhoods that had seen scant commercial activity for years. Areas that were home to hardworking immigrants, municipal workers, and what remained of the rest of the middle class in the city all thrived. New York's population grew for the first time in decades; its economy added hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

This was the revivified city that reelected Giuliani in 1997 with a huge (by New York standards) 13 percentage-point margin that demolished the notion that New York is an unfailingly left-wing town.

The Council Moves Left

While Michael Bloomberg was making history as the first Republican to succeed a GOP mayor in New York, left-wing Democrats extended their sway by sweeping most of the City Council, borough president, and other races where term limits forced dozens of officeholders to step down. These new officials, who campaigned for more subsidized housing, higher spending on New York's dysfunctional education system, and fatter contracts for city workers, should give pause to those who think that Bloomberg's election diminished the liberal hold on Gotham's politics.

Nothing demonstrates the continuing leftward tilt in the Democratic Party more clearly than the makeup of the new City Council, which will negotiate budgets with the mayor and pass or nix his legislation. More than 200 Democrats flooded into City Council primaries, especially in the 37 districts where no incumbents were running. Some 60 percent of the winners come from backgrounds in government, local social services, or community activism. Some are already part of the city's Democratic establishment—the sons and daughters of retiring City Council members, or aides of current council members running with the blessing of their organization. These include Brooklyn school board member Erik Martin Dilan, who won in his father's Cypress Hills district by stressing his achievement in helping to stop the city from letting Edison Schools manage failing public schools; Councilwoman Gale Brewer, former chief of staff of defeated 1997 mayoral candidate Ruth Messinger; and former state senator Larry Seabrook, a staunch supporter of Al Sharpton's 1997 mayoral bid.

"It's not what people who voted for term limits expected," says political consultant Jerry Skurnik. "Rather than some new kind of civic do-gooder, many of those elected had strong ties to the old system."

Indeed, term limits simply accelerated a decade-long trend for candidates from government social services agencies and nonprofits to fill the void created by the slow demise of local political clubs and politically active private-sector unions. When Giuliani became mayor in 1994, about one-fifth of the council hailed from careers in government—or from organizations heavily supported by the

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The vote overturned traditional city patterns: Giuliani won 75 percent of the Jewish vote—a greater percentage than his Catholic vote—and he also garnered 43 percent of the Hispanic tally. He swept to victory even in liberal election districts. Queens, which had a scant handful of Republican elected officials, gave him 65 percent of its vote, and Brooklyn, with only a single Republican officeholder, handed him 53 percent of the votes cast. He cruised to victory by a nearly four-to-one margin in a predominantly Italian neighborhood like Howard Beach and by a more than three-to-one margin in a Jewish area like Brighton Beach. He won in polyglot neighborhoods like Flushing and the Lower East Side by three-to-one and three-to-two, respectively.

Giuliani's 1997 victory should have been the beginning of a new Republican coalition in New York. The platform was clear: the effective crime-fighting that has made New York the safest big city in America; tax reduction to spark continued economic growth; freeing the private sector to build the business districts and housing of the twenty-first century; welfare reform based on a culture of self-reliance and personal responsibility; education reform centered on charter schools and vouchers. There was every reason to think, back in 1997, that the city that had reelected Giuliani would listen seriously to a party based on those principles.

But Giuliani himself showed no interest in creating such a movement. Virtually from the beginning of his tenure he had been a freelancer, unconcerned with building his party or grooming a successor. His chief political mentor had always been Liberal Party boss Raymond Harding. His giant political blunder of endorsing incumbent Democratic governor

public sector—and they were often Giuliani's biggest opponents, voting as a bloc against his early austerity budgets, for instance. Over time, the local Republican Party's inability to field credible candidates has helped increasingly leftist Democrats from these backgrounds win more races, and term limits hastened the process this year by throwing so many seats up for grabs.

In the absence of a viable Republican Party, most city races were decided not in the general election, but in the Democratic primaries, where left-leaning voters dominated. Exit polling commissioned by *City Journal* found that 41 percent of those who participated in the Democratic primary runoff in October worked for government or for the nonprofit sector, which is heavily supported by government funds. These voters, who favor candidates who support big government and heavy public spending, outnumbered private-sector participants (38 percent of the runoff voters), and shaped the Democratic Party's slate.

With the departure of City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, a moderate Democrat who took a hard line against leftist dissenters, far-left City Council members are poised for a bigger role in the city's affairs. The majority of those jockeying to replace Vallone are left-wingers, including Harlem council member Philip Reed, a former p.r. man for a gay-lesbian organization and a frequent opponent of Giuliani on issues like policing; Tracy Boyland, a member of a Brooklyn political family and former union representative in the United Federation of Teachers; Al Vann, a 25-year veteran of the State Assembly, whose long and varied political career includes having led Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign in New York City; and Bill Perkins of Upper Manhattan, an ex-employee of several city agencies, whose major legislative initiative in 2001 was to co-sponsor a law barring "transgender" discrimination in the city.

All these council victories have long-term implications. Two of the four Democratic mayoral candidates last year, and three of the five borough presidents elected in November, were ex-councilmen. If the new council members have as much success rising beyond that chamber as their predecessors, they will affect the shape of New York's Democratic Party for years to come.

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Mario Cuomo over George Pataki in 1994, in the mistaken belief that party meant nothing and a victorious and grateful Cuomo would lend Albany's support to the mayor's policy initiatives in the city, completely fractured Gotham's already weak GOP. When Cuomo lost, an understandably outraged group of Pataki loyalists took the Queens County Republican organization away from Giuliani supporters in a meeting that ended in a fistfight. A leader of that revolt, Councilman Tom Ognibene, snatched the City Council Republican leadership from Giuliani ally Michael Abel. War also broke out in Brooklyn, where a new county leadership scored a primary victory over the incumbent Giuliani supporter, the only Republican representing the borough in Albany. The insurgent Republican then lost the seat in the general election.

In addition, the mayor clashed with members of his administration who might have emerged as viable successors and Republican leaders—most notably former police commissioner William Bratton, a Democrat once likely to switch to the GOP. Giuliani did nothing to cultivate for higher elected office either the Republican city councilmen, such as Andrew Eristoff, whom he'd drawn into his administration, or the prominent black and Hispanic officials who might become part of the party and broaden its appeal—people like former housing commissioner Richard Roberts, Health and Hospitals chairman Luis Marcos, or Deputy Mayor Rudy Washington. "You would think that people who worked for the Giuliani administration would have rushed to run for office [last year]," says political consultant Joseph Mercurio. But except for CUNY Board Chairman Herman Badillo, none did.

As a strong mayor, Giuliani had what it took to energize the city's GOP: a vision, money, and a grassroots following. No Republican in the state could tap campaign contributors like Giuliani, who raised nearly $10 million for his 1997 reelection. He could have wielded his fund-raising prowess as a weapon to replace the leaders of the city's sleepy borough GOP organizations with wide-awake partisans of his own agenda. But he largely let the party organizations lie, engineering end-runs around them for his own reelection campaign but leaving those who shared his beliefs to fight their own battles against party bosses without help from him.

Without a challenge, the party organizations have drifted their own way, serving as patronage mills or appendages of the state party. Threadbare remnants of country-club Rockefeller Republicanism or spoils-system D'Amato Republicanism, they are oblivious to the Reagan revolution that woke up Republicanism in the rest of the nation two decades ago. The county leaders in Queens, the Bronx, and Manhattan are state senators, more attuned to the politics of Albany than to the city; similarly, the new leader of the Staten Island GOP is a Pataki loyalist.

The task of these local organizations is unglamorous, but it is the fundamental grassroots work that builds parties: voter-registration drives, candidate recruitment, petitioning drives, and fund-raising. Yet their unenthusiastic, lethargic leaders did nothing to exploit Giuliani's momentum. Longtime Manhattan county chair Roy Goodman routinely came under fire from party members for paying more attention to his own fragile political future than to building the party, and since 1995, the Manhattan GOP has lost both of its City Council seats. A continuing bribery investigation of State Senator Guy Velella, the Bronx Republican County leader, has curtailed his influence and effectiveness. "The decline of the party seems to correspond to the increasing vulnerability of the county leaders," says one former high-ranking Republican campaign strategist. "They've spent more of their time trying to save themselves."

So Giuliani's election victories turned out to be the high-water mark of the party's very brief resurgence instead of a springboard to further gains: and now the party is shriveling up again. Republican voter registrations in the city have slumped by about 10,000, or 2 percent, to 523,761, in the past five years, with the worst losses in the Bronx, where enrollment shrunk by 6 percent, and in Queens, where registrations are down 4 percent. By contrast, Democratic registrations have surged citywide by 157,400, or 6 percent, to 2,748,538. Today, there are 5.25 Democrats in the city for every Republican, down from one Republican for every 3.5 Democrats in 1965, the year Lindsay ran for mayor. Gotham's GOP even seems to be losing core supporters to energetic new players like the Independence Party, whose registrations in the city have more than tripled in five years to 51,900, largely

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thanks to candidate Thomas Golisano's anti-Pataki gubernatorial run in 1998.

During this fall's campaign, despite Bloomberg's $69 million efforts on his own behalf, the city's official Republican leadership radiated defeatism virtually from Riverdale to the Rockaways. GOP candidates and volunteers tell of being instructed not to campaign in heavily Democratic neighborhoods and not to set up voter-registration efforts there, for fear of inciting an anti-Republican backlash and increasing Democratic voter turnout. Party leaders even advised City Council candidate Michelle Bouchard, running in a Manhattan district that encompasses Chelsea, not to campaign in public housing projects because it would stir up minority turnout against her.

This frame of mind made Republicans virtually invisible throughout large swathes of the city. David Herz, a GOP City Council candidate on the Upper West Side of Manhattan who took to the streets to meet constituents, says that locals reacted with astonishment. "I ran across people who said they hadn't seen a Republican in years."

These Young Turks have utterly rejected their GOP elders' stance of embarrassment and inferiority, as if Republicanism were radioactive or depraved. The New York Young Republican Club, teeming with would-be reformers, now sponsors its own street fair on Sixth Avenue, in defiance of the notion that Republicans should not be seen or heard too much in Manhattan. "It's hard for me to imagine that any Democrat would be so provoked by seeing a Republican at an event that he would be motivated to run out and vote against us," says Robert Hornak, the club's chief. "You get the feeling that some of the current Republican leadership want to discourage these activities, so they can keep the party small and weak—and controlled by them," he adds.

Nowhere are the GOP leaders' shortcomings clearer than in their failure to recruit candidates. No Republican ran last year for comptroller or public advocate. The Republican line in City Council, State Assembly, and State Senate races often stays empty in Gotham. In 2001, for instance, the Brooklyn Republican organization, which frequently endorses Democrats, ran no candidate in six of the borough's 16 City Council races.

Assemblyman John Ravitz, heir apparent to Goodman as county chair, defends the practice of leaving ballot lines empty: the party doesn't want to put up "sacrificial lambs," he says. But in many cases where the party won't fight, it's not a foregone conclusion that it couldn't win. In many neighborhoods where Giuliani won decisively in 1997, for instance, the Republican county organizations didn't bother to run candidates for State Assembly the following year. Last year, too, Bloomberg swept to easy victory in places—from Forest Hills and Flushing to Borough Park—that fielded no Republican City Council candidates.

The scarcity of GOP candidates leaves Democrats free to focus their entire firepower on those few Republicans who brave the electoral process. Matthew Hunter, a founder of the Forest Park Republican Club, ran for Assembly in Queens in 1998 but found his task made more difficult by the lack of Republicans running elsewhere, which allowed Democrats to pour more resources into defeating him. "I saw the district I ran in as one of the top three or four opportunities in Queens to elect a Republican, but it's tough without much support," says Hunter now.

When GOP organizations do recruit, they often do it so haphazardly that every race becomes an uphill fight. Manhattan City Council candidate Michelle Bouchard reports that nearly four years ago she casually mentioned at a Republican Club's Christmas party that she might like to run for office someday. Nothing happened: no coaching, no grooming—until last May, when a GOP leader asked, out of the blue, if she would like to run. "I suppose it would have been better if I had a year to build an infrastructure to run," she says of her unsuccessful election campaign.

When candidates emerge on their own, they can't count on help from the local GOP organizations. After Jay Golub decided to run for a Manhattan City Council seat last year, Wall Street trader Jim Vigotty signed on to manage the energetic newcomer's campaign. In June, Vigotty began to collect the signatures needed to get Golub on the ballot, but, when the Republican organization told him that petitioning was the responsibility of district

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leaders, he backed off. A week before the deadline, he discovered that the party functionaries had collected just 100 of the nearly 500 signatures his candidate needed. He scrambled—successfully—to print petitions and get signatures. "I couldn't even get some of the district leaders to return my phone calls," says Vigotty bitterly.

Committed Young Turks like Vigotty conclude that their biggest obstacle to running effective campaigns is often the party itself. When Susan Cleary ran for Congress in 2000 in a district that primarily encompasses Brooklyn, the county organization's district leaders collected few signatures for her; the state party did nothing. Though discouraged by this lack of party support, she found that voters—especially poor parents—listened intently to her ideas about how school choice might benefit pupils, a sharp contrast to the way her own party organization treated her.

"Republicans haven't exploited the changes that have expanded natural Republican constituencies in the city."

And of course that is the point: the city is teeming with groups willing to listen to—and perhaps embrace—Republican themes. But without an engaged local leadership, the party has stood by as Democrats have courted new New Yorkers who might well find the tenets of post-Reagan Republicanism persuasive. In those stretches of the city where the two-party system has disappeared, voters don't get to hear the Republican message, and Democratic candidates never get called to account for policies that may be out of step with their constituents. "It's very easy to find neighborhoods where Democratic officeholders consistently vote against the interests of their constituents," says Gary Popkin, a former Brooklyn Republican congressional candidate. "But since we often don't run Republican candidates in these neighborhoods, we don't get our ideas out there."

For example, the legislative agenda of the New York New Media Association, a group of executives of the Internet and communications companies that have lured tens of thousands of new professionals to the city in the last decade, reads like a Republican manifesto, calling for tax cuts and less regulation. Nevertheless, Democratic mayoral hopefuls Mark Green and Alan Hevesi far more actively romanced these companies than any Republican did, and over the summer Green picked up endorsements from 50 top new-economy executives. "Why isn't the Republican Party reaching out to these people?" asks Kristi Kaepplein, an Internet executive active in local Young Republican organizations. "This industry is a hotbed of entrepreneurs who despise government regulations and benefit from lower taxes. They are natural Republicans."

During the boom Giuliani years, New York also gained over 100,000 lawyers, consultants, accountants, and the like, and these young urban professionals have bought co-ops and brownstones in such traditionally liberal neighborhoods as the Upper West Side and Park Slope. Voters like this are clearly searching for an alternative to candidates put forward by the city's Democrats. In the mayor's race, Bloomberg scored an easy victory among voters who work in the private sector—56 percent of them voted for him, while only 40 percent pulled the lever for Mark Green, according to exit polling commissioned by *City Journal*. But Republican operatives haven't recognized or exploited the demographic changes that have expanded natural Republican constituencies in the city.

The local GOP has displayed, if possible, even less energy and creativity in pursuing minority voters, soon to be the majority of the city's electorate and, evidence increasingly suggests, up for grabs in ways Republicans don't fathom. Among Asian Americans who have recently enrolled as Gotham voters, for instance, 17 percent are registered as Republicans, 50 percent as Democrats, and the remainder as independents, says political consultant Jerry Skurnik. He sees a similar pattern among non–Puerto Rican Hispanics, and Latino observers agree. Says Angelo Falcon of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education

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Fund: "There's a general feeling of discontent among Latinos with white liberals."

Herman Badillo argues that the GOP's future in the city lies in appealing to minorities. The increasing number of middle-class Hispanic households, he points out, want the safe streets Giuliani provided, reasonable taxes, and good schools—something the Democrats, in thrall to the teachers' union, can't support, by contrast with the GOP reformers' embrace of every variety of school choice. These bread-and-butter Republican messages resonate with other minority and immigrant groups. "Many immigrants have a conservative family background," says Rene Lobo, an Indian-American woman who garnered 30 percent of the vote running as a Republican in a heavily Democratic Queens City Council district. "We should be appealing to them."

Giuliani captured a hefty 43 percent of the Latino vote in 1997, and four years later Bloomberg did even better, winning nearly half the Hispanic vote. Even so, heavily Hispanic districts continue to send liberal Democratic members to the City Council, State Assembly, and State Senate.

Party leaders just don't see the opportunity. Former deputy mayor Rudy Washington recounts that he pressed GOP brass to find a black Republican to run in 2000 for an open State Senate seat in southeastern Queens—a neighborhood of middle-class, home-owning African-American families, who, Washington thought, would applaud a Giuliani-like agenda. But his effort sparked no interest, and the GOP county organization endorsed the Democrat running in the district. "We're not thinking outside the box," says Washington restrainedly. Wanda

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Goodloe, former Republican chair of the Harlem Community Development Corporation, sounds the same theme. "Republican policies have made a real difference in Harlem's economy," she says. "This is a good time to reach out to young people in that community, emphasizing the accomplishments." But nothing doing.

Bloomberg's election unexpectedly hands the GOP another golden chance. The new mayor has it in his power to reshape the county organizations by advancing promising young Republicans who speak to the city of opportunity that emerged in the 1990s. Some of these potential leaders are already active in reform groups like the New York Young Republican Club, the Forest Park Republican Club of Queens, and in an insurgent movement in Brooklyn that just unseated the old leadership. Promising players from minority communities are also waiting in the wings.

"Giuliani captured a hefty 43 percent of the Latino vote, and four years later Bloomberg did even better."

But who knows if Bloomberg—a recent GOP recruit—will feel any need to build the party to ensure his own political success? The early signs are not auspicious: Bloomberg has already endorsed the notion of nonpartisan elections, in which candidates run without a party affiliation. "The idea of party is over in New York," says Bloomberg political consultant David Garth. "You get better government with nonpartisan elections."

If Bloomberg demurs, the state GOP still could spark a New York City Republican revival, especially by putting more resources into this November's State Assembly and Senate races in the city, where a popular Governor Pataki will head the ticket. "Bloomberg's success after eight years of Giuliani should encourage the party to put up more Republican candidates in the next election," says William Fling, one of the founders of the Gramercy Park Republican Club. "But so far I don't see any organized effort to recruit candidates."

A revived city party would give both the state and the national GOP a significant boost. No Republican presidential candidate will ever again win the Empire State—as Ronald Reagan did in 1984, when he garnered 884,000 votes in the city—without a stronger party in Gotham. And the state GOP faces more trouncings, like those it took in the last two U.S. Senate races, unless it can generate more New York City votes.

A revival will need strong-willed funders, too. One of the great ironies of New York City Republican politics is that the city's candidates and organizations—save for the Manhattan GOP or Rudy Giuliani—are often starved for money, even though many of the party's biggest national and statewide contributors live in New York. In the 2000 presidential election, New Yorkers gave more money to the Bush campaign than the residents of any city outside of Texas. But local candidates complain that they cannot even get the Republican National Committee to return their phone calls, and little of the money that contributors pour into state party coffers makes its way back to the city.

"The problem is that there aren't credible Republican candidates to give to," says one local member of the Club for Growth, the Washington, D.C.–based organization that contributes to candidates who support small government and low taxes. Grassroots GOP insurgents in the city argue that it is time for the big givers who live or work here to help change this. These contributors, they say, have the power to demand more state and national resources in New York for party building. Only then will more credible candidates emerge whom contributors can support. And, whether those candidates win at first or not, they will change Gotham's political culture for the better by providing the genuine debate that is American democracy's lifeblood. ■

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Let's Ban Car Alarms

These infernal gadgets shatter urban civility, while doing not a nickel's worth of good.

Brian C. Anderson

WEEEUWEEEUWEEEU
WUUWUUWUUWUU

You struggle up to consciousness. *What's wrong? What time is it?*

PYEW PYEW PYEW PYEW
OOOOOOO? OOOOOOO?

Your heart's racing, blood pressure spiking up. Adrenaline-charged, you're bolt awake. It's 4:00 AM. *That $!@# car alarm!*

WOMP! WOMP! WOMP! WOMP!
OOOO*EEEE*; OOOO*EEEE*; OOOO.

In imagination, you become bazooka-wielding Arnold Schwarzenegger and blast the wretched car to Kingdom Come, alarm and all.

WEEEUWEEEUWEEEUWEEEU.

Why do we have to have these damned $!@# things?

We don't. New York City should entirely ban their use within its five boroughs. Car alarms don't do a nickel's worth of good, the evidence overwhelmingly shows. But they do plenty of bad. Not only do they measurably harm the thousands of individuals they harass somewhere in the city every minute of the day, but also they fray the sense of public order and civility that are key constituents of the quality of urban life.

One can't state strongly enough how vehemently New Yorkers hate these infernal devices. "People start climbing the walls around here," says Caroline Besancon, a teacher who lives in Manhattan's Inwood neighborhood. "You hear the alarm go off—and it happens at all hours—and you just dread that it won't stop." Bronx Campaign for Peace and Quiet founder John Dallas ranks car alarms with rap-blasting "boom-box cars" (see box, page 71) and rowdy neighbors as a major cause of noise complaints. "Every time we have a community meeting, alarms come up," he says. Roughly 80 percent of Gotham community boards describe them as neighborhood irritations and say that things are getting worse, or at least not better. More than 80 percent of the calls to New York's quality-of-life hotline concern noise, and many are car-alarm complaints, police say.

New York residents aren't the only ones up in arms. In England, the alarms are the Number One noise annoyance, scoring ten out of ten on an "apoplexy meter," according to a poll last summer. The vast majority of respondents to a recent international survey on noise rated car alarms as "intrusive" and among the most aggravating of noise disruptions.

But then car-alarm makers have designed them to aggravate. First, they're *loud*. Top models, with menacing names like Viper and Hellfire, boast sirens that hit a painful 125 decibels. "That's as loud as a jet or a disco," observes noise expert Arline Bronzaft—and it's sounding right outside your window.

Equally annoying, the alarms often come with electronic sensors so skittish that a thunderstorm, a passing motorcycle, or even someone leaning on a door can get the high-strung things screaming. On some estimates, 95 percent of car alarms that go off are false alarms. Some alarms trigger automatically for a few seconds as the owner approaches his car and unlocks it with his electronic key-chain "entry system." With so many vehicles equipped with these frantic noisemakers—one in four households now owns one, costing anywhere from $100 to $1,000 and purchased either with the car or in the

Illustrations by Arnold Roth

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$500 million "aftermarket"—a residential urban neighborhood can suffer three or four blaring per hour, on a bad day, even if there's no thief in sight.

The alarms can do a lot more damage than merely annoy people, however. Noise isn't just a matter of opinion, as the *New York Times* asserted recently, but a serious pollutant—"a hazard to your health and well-being," explains Bronzaft, who advises New York City on noise-related quality-of-life issues. In fact, the body reacts to sound levels above 70 decibels—and car alarms are nearly *50 times* louder than that, since every ten-decibel increase represents a doubling in loudness—as if it's in danger. Capillaries in the extremities constrict and blood surges to the brain, the liver secretes glucose for energy, and the adrenal gland pumps hormones into the bloodstream, boosting stress levels through the roof, as the body gets ready to fight (see "Quiet, Please," Autumn 1994). With every New Yorker on edge after September 11, such shocks to the system are even more unwelcome.

Car alarms also take a toll on sleep. Even a 45-decibel noise will wake a typical sleeper. An alarm honking louder than a jackhammer on the street outside your building all but guarantees it. Psychologists add that the constantly changing noise that car alarms emit is more upsetting than continuous noise, making it more difficult to put the pillow over your head and get back to sleep. The negative effects of sleeplessness range from lost productivity to mood problems to a greater likelihood of car accidents.

But the alarms' most corrosive effect is on the essential urban virtue of civility. Cities—where millions of people from dramatically different backgrounds live densely packed together—require countless acts of mutual adjustment and reciprocal decency in order to flourish. Car alarms send a message directly counter to such civility. "People who place such alarms in their vehicles show the ultimate in selfishness: a willingness to invade the space of their fellow citizens with a raucous noise that says, 'I care about my car and couldn't care less about your ears,'" argues anti-noise activist Dave Pickell. No surprise, given the aggressive nature of these devices, that "car lynchings" of vehicles with disruptive alarms are frequent. Bleary-eyed citizens have slashed tires, smeared door handles with dog doo, or even smashed the windows of offending vehicles. Car alarms are civic poison.

The justification for all this nuisance is that the alarms purport to deter auto crime. Invented in a funky California auto hi-fi shop in the seventies, they first really started to disrupt the lives of city dwellers everywhere in the crime-ridden eighties. Their dystopian wails were a desperate S.O.S., signifying that no one was in charge and that public order had collapsed. Urban police seemed powerless to stop the epidemic of auto crime (and of crime in general): in Gotham, where an ill-managed and demoralized NYPD had all but decriminalized car theft, thieves were stealing upward of 100,000 cars yearly and looting countless more. The newfangled devices, "born from and based on fear," as vehicle-security expert Eric Abbiss describes them, offered a sense of security to besieged car owners, who reasoned that an alarm might scare car thieves away by its ear-splitting screams. Many states, New York included, agreed. With prodding from alarm-industry lobbyists, they passed laws forcing auto insurers to offer a discount (up to 10 percent annually) to any policyholder who put in an alarm—in effect subsidizing the industry's steady growth over the next two decades.

But 20 years on, it's incontrovertible: car alarms don't work. "Noise alarms are basically designed, so far as we can tell, to annoy your neighbors," judges Kim Hazelbaker, senior vice president of the Highway Loss Data Institute, the insurance-industry think tank that studies auto-insurance losses. "We've looked at the thefts of insured vehicles with and without car alarms and came away with the view that they don't make a difference," he says. Fordham University psychology professor Harold Takooshian, co-author of a forthcoming study on car alarms' effectiveness, hasn't found a shred of evidence that they deter anything other than a good night's rest. "If these alarms were medicines, the makers would find themselves prosecuted for fraud," he says. "I don't see how anyone can speak in their favor."

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The reasons they don't work are straightforward. First, a determined professional car thief can make short work of one—and these days the pros are responsible for 80 percent of the $7 billion-plus car-theft racket. A noise alarm would be "a two-second slowdown" for a seasoned crook, notes one cop working in auto crime. Another streetwise observer agrees: "I know these cats. They'll steal your car and have it on a flatbed truck, and the alarm is still going off," says Dwayne "Snipe" Holmes, a former member of the PJ Crips gang, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*. At best, it is possible that an alarm might prompt a teenage joyrider or an amateur car-stereo thief to choose another car—displacing rather than reducing thefts—but there's no hard evidence that this is the case.

Second, the alarms have become so commonplace and false alarms so ubiquitous that nobody thinks a crime is in process when one goes off. "It's not unusual to walk by a parking garage with an alarm sounding, and the first thought isn't, 'Call the cops'; it's, 'Why doesn't that idiot shut his alarm off?'" notes Hazelbaker of the insurance-industry think tank. Says Detective Randy Ballin of the California Highway Patrol: "No one pays attention to alarms in Los Angeles anymore." Some time ago, Ballin and another officer, both in plainclothes, were strolling down Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills when they came across a red Ferrari without a license plate. Opening the unlocked car door, the two officers triggered the alarm. "Here we are in the middle of the day in the middle of Beverly Hills with all these people around and this alarm on a Ferrari going off, and no one even notices us," Ballin recalls. His tale jibes with a survey by the Ohio-based Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. that found that fewer than 1 percent of respondents would call the police on hearing a car alarm. Even owners are jaded, says Brooklyn alarm dealer Norman Maryasis. "If you're in a store, and an alarm goes off in the parking lot outside, do you immediately think it's your car and come rushing out?" he asks. "No."

"'If these alarms were medicines, the makers would find themselves prosecuted for fraud.'"

Recently, I discovered for myself how right Maryasis is. A cop friend graciously offered to lend me his pickup truck, saying he'd park it near the precinct house and leave the keys in the ashtray. I'd never seen the small truck before, but my wife had—and said she'd spotted it when walking past the station earlier. Finding the truck she described, I got in. Sure enough, the keys were in the ashtray—but I couldn't find the right one. As I jabbed key after key into the ignition, the alarm suddenly began to blast. I couldn't stop it. Passersby shot angry looks at me.

Sheepishly, I ran into the police station and asked the cop at the front desk to call my friend, who arrived in his cruiser five minutes later. "I set off your alarm and can't figure out how to shut it off," I cried.

"I don't have a car alarm," he replied.

"Aren't these your keys?" I asked, holding them up.

"No, they're not. You must've gotten into the wrong truck!" he laughed. And indeed, the real owner lived three houses down—and was working in his front yard as his car alarm reverberated through the whole neighborhood. He had heard the noise but simply assumed it couldn't be his alarm. My officer friend, turning to me, summed up the fiasco: "You could've stolen it, and nobody would've lifted a finger!"

Despite the evidence stacked against car alarms, lobbyists insist that their devices work as advertised. "If we didn't have them, we would see a massive increase in stolen cars," says Matt Swanston, a manager of communications for the Consumer Electronics Association, a trade group that represents alarm manufacturers and other electronics purveyors. The industry's proof: the 35 percent drop in auto theft during the 1990s. "You have to assume the alarms are working," Swanston argues.

But this is nonsense. Auto theft rocketed upward in the eighties, peaking at a shocking 1.7

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million cars stolen nationwide during 1991, even as car-alarm sales boomed: then–industry-leader Code Alarm's sales increased nearly 70 percent in 1987 alone. What really cut car theft was better policing, especially in New York. When Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his top cop William Bratton arrived in 1993, Gotham was the car-theft capital of the world. By going after the chop shops and auto exporters that cannibalized the stolen cars and sold their parts on foreign markets, Giuliani-era policing slashed car thefts by more than 60 percent by the end of the nineties, from their 1993 peak of 110,000 (see "What We've Learned About Policing," Spring 1999).

The industry's fallback position is to point out that 95 percent of those who've bought alarms are happy with them and that people feel more secure owning them. But so what? Lots of things people buy or do might make them individually happy or reassure them but come with social costs that may or may not be worth putting up with. In the case of car alarms, "it's hard to imagine that whatever their potential good is might outweigh their societal cost," says insurance-industry think-tank executive Hazelbaker—especially if that potential good is only that car-alarm owners *like* them, regardless of their real-world effectiveness.

Even if car alarms did deter crime, they'd be hard to defend in a strict cost-benefit analysis. The *New York Times*'s unfailingly interesting columnist John Tierney has described an economic experiment by University of California at San Diego professor Richard Carson that calculates the social cost of preventing just one car from

Drive-by Noise Assaults

Those who say that cars are toxic to cities never cite the automobile's worst urban offense: noise pollution. Second only to car alarms as a shatterer of urban tranquillity are "boom-box" cars—vehicles rigged with stereo amplifiers so powerful that they can rattle window panes blocks away.

Boom-box cars have given birth to an entire subculture dedicated to offending bourgeois sensibilities, as even a cursory look at car-audio ads reveals. In one, a young punk with a stubby goatee, wearing wrap-around black sunglasses, sneeringly sticks out his diamond-studded tongue. The ad copy reads: RESEARCH SHOWS EXCESSIVELY LOUD CAR STEREOS ARE THE NUMBER ONE ANNOYANCE TO PEOPLE OVER 40. WHATEVER. A second ad promises: AMPS THAT RIP YOUR ?!%*! EARS OFF. A third commands: FORGET WAKING THE NEIGHBORS. SCARE THE NEIGHBORS . . . SHATTER SOUND PRESSURE RECORDS AND WINDOWS. Such ads boast, as anti-noise activist Michael Wright points out, that "boom cars are destructive devices intended to do injury to others."

Typically male, under 30, and with little education, boom-box-car enthusiasts readily admit they're out to affront. "I am proudly one of the people who enjoy making your windows rattle," Ryan Herron told an Indianapolis paper in early November. "It's kind of a power thing." Says fellow boom-car fan Blake Polen: "My music is always loud but goes louder at intersections or parking lots where a lot of other people can hear the music. I guess the louder the system you have, the more bragging rights you can have."

In fact, boom-system owners regularly enter into "db [decibel] drag racing"—competition to see whose car stereo can hit the most deafening noise levels. The current record is 174.2 decibels: nearly loud enough to splinter human bone. In another common practice, boom cars will prowl the streets, basses throbbing, seeking to trigger hypersensitive car alarms, sometimes setting off as many as three a block.

Many city dwellers—as intended—are outraged by boom-box cars and have pushed to have them muted. Responding to popular pressure, municipalities from Buffalo, New York, to Papillion, Nebraska, have passed decibel ordinances to crack down on these "devices from beyond the gates of hell," as one opponent calls them.

New York City was one of the earliest to try to silence them. Mayor Rudy Giuliani,

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being stolen in New York by the use of car alarms. It works out at considerably more than the average stolen-car value of $6,100 or so. Carson's calculation, done a few years ago, runs like this. Assume that an alarm wakes up 500 city sleepers for 15 minutes, that the value of lost leisure time is 50 percent of one's normal wage ($15 per hour in Gotham, Carson posited), and that there are ten false alarms for every real one. Do the math: even if the alarms were to scare away the bad guys, the $9,375 cost of every $6,100 saving is a poor trade-off.

Making the alarms even harder to justify is the existence of vehicle security systems that *do* work—noiselessly. According to the Highway Loss Data Institute, manufacturer-installed "immobilizers"—they shut off your car's ignition system when someone with no key or a key without the right computer chip embedded in it tries to start the car—have shrunk insurance losses for vehicles rigged with them by 50 percent.

Impressive, too, is the Lojack car-tracking system. A stolen car outfitted with Lojack will send out a radio signal that police can trace with ease, leading to a remarkable 95 percent recovery rate (75 percent within 24 hours). Equipping just 2 percent of the cars with the system in an area where lots of cars are stolen, the National Bureau of Economic Research estimates, can reduce auto theft by up to a third by helping cops nab the professional crooks who commit a disproportionate number of the thefts. New car-tracking systems using satellite technology promise even bigger successes.

shortly after he took office in 1994, instructed the NYPD to enforce a provision of the Vehicle and Traffic Law that makes it illegal to play amplified sound from a vehicle in excess of 80 decibels. Violators faced a summons or, if they had rung up multiple violations, even confiscation of their vehicles. But enforcement has been spotty, noise activists say. As John Dallas, head of the Bronx Campaign for Peace and Quiet, reports, "At least in the Bronx, there's still a huge sense of consternation about boom-box cars."

Anti-boom-box-car efforts have run into charges of racism, since, in cities anyway, it's often minority youths, blasting gangster rap or salsa, who use the audio systems to annoy or threaten anyone in their vicinity. A Chicago alderman recently tried—unsuccessfully—to overturn Chicago's tough anti-boom-box-car ordinance, which allows cops to impound excessively noisy vehicles (more than 7,000 have been seized since the ordinance was introduced in 1996), claiming that the regulation had a disproportionate impact on minorities. In voting overwhelmingly to retain the ordinance, City Council members dismissed the racism charges and stressed that the regulation "has done wonders" in making the city quieter—and that it is wildly popular. Consumer Electronics Association lobbyist Doug Johnson still thinks the penalty "unnecessarily severe." "The word on the street," he grumbled, "is that if you buy this [equipment] you will be pulled over right away."

Such grumbling is music to sleep-deprived, law-abiding urban ears.

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Let's Ban Car Alarms

From its inception, the car-alarm industry has known that its product was going to make people mad, and it has waged a constant campaign of damage control. Its basic tack has been to argue that most of the false-alarm problem can be solved by greater professionalism and consumer education. "We think the nuisance alarms can be minimized, if not eliminated," claims industry advocate Swanston, "if consumers are educated about the products they have and make sure that alarms are installed correctly, properly, and safely." The industry has voluntarily promoted a certification program for installers to help meet these goals.

Yet the alarm makers' argument fails to persuade. True, a bad installation can make an alarm so sensitive that it'll go off virtually if someone looks at the car the wrong way, but the association's effort to upgrade installation presupposes that alarm owners want what their neighbors want. Not so: as car-alarm specialist and former installer Abbiss notes: "I used to have customers come to me and say, 'I want this thing so sensitive that it'll go off when a leaf falls on it.'" A Baltimore-area installer remarked of his customers a while back, "They're just getting too paranoid."

In addition, as many an urban resident will tell you, aggressive, resentful motorists increasingly let their alarms go off on purpose as an in-your-face provocation. Consumer education seems unlikely to change such antisocial behavior. And finally, the growing number of alarms on the street means that even if the false-alarm rate falls, the overall number of alarms going off isn't likely to diminish.

So if car alarms don't work and drive most everybody crazy, what can we do about them? Many cities, including New York and Baltimore, have tried to crack down on them by fining owners of alarms that don't shut off after a few minutes and empowering cops to go into a car whose alarm keeps blaring to disable the device, if they can't find its owner to turn it off. But in Gotham, enforcement, though it varies from precinct to precinct, remains lax. Even before September 11 gave them other things to worry about, cops wrote fewer than 300 summonses a year for car-alarm violations.

Even if enforcement were draconian, however, the time-limit approach doesn't go nearly far enough. A disgruntled Staten Islander explains why in a letter to the *New York Times*: "Limiting the amount of time that these alarms may go off has done little good; the same alarm can go off time and again." As for sleep, Les Blomberg, an anti-noise advocate, has it exactly right: "All it takes is a few seconds of one of these things blaring, and that's it—you're wide awake."

New York should be the first municipality to ban car alarms: you can have one if you want, but you can't turn it on in the five boroughs. If yours goes off even for a moment, you are subject to a $500 fine. In the same vein, state legislators should end the absurd mandated insurance break for alarms.

The industry would howl and lobby to derail a ban, of course, just as it worked successfully to quash a City Council bill in 1997 that would have outlawed the aftermarket sale of alarms within the city. But a firm mayoral push might be sufficient to get enough council members on board to pass a ban. Moreover, a ban might head off a new, motion-activated *bike* alarm, called "Cycurity," that will be coming to market any day now with the potential to swell the urban din exponentially.

Sure, New York is never going to be a quiet place. Urban life is noisy. But cities have been getting inexorably louder in recent years: England's are ten times noisier than a decade ago, with car alarms a major culprit, according to a new, long-term study. No doubt the same is true for New York and other U.S. cities too: the Census Bureau finds that noise—not crime, as you'd expect—is the major reason Americans give for wanting to move. People need noise limits to live peaceably together in great numbers, and they always have: the first recorded noise ordinance dates back to Julius Caesar's banning of chariots from the streets of Rome after dark.

It's a mark of how far New York has come from the era of 2,200 murders a year that we can think about amenities like peace and quiet rather than mere survival. Especially after September 11, we must keep on building a city that thrives and prospers—and urban civility is part of the recipe. ■

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The Campus Diversity Fraud

Colleges justify racial preferences in admissions in the name of diversity. It's a hokey defense of a bankrupt policy that they should scrap.

John H. McWhorter

In September, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled that the crude "black bonus" in the University of Georgia's admissions policy wasn't what the U.S. Supreme Court's 1978 *Bakke* decision meant when it allowed colleges to take "diversity" into account in admissions decisions. Let's hope that this decision spells the beginning of the end for the "diversity" argument in college admissions. It has been, from the start, an argument shot through with duplicity and bad faith. It is a craven, disingenuous, and destructive canard, antithetical to interracial harmony and black excellence—and racist besides.

The diversity imperative now so powerful on campus arose almost by chance, springing from a remark Justice Lewis Powell made in his concurrence in the *Bakke* decision. Allan Bakke had charged the medical school at the University of California at Davis with discrimination for twice turning him down, despite his high grades and admissions-test scores, while routinely admitting black students with C averages and poor admissions-test scores. The court found that quota systems like Davis's were unconstitutional, but Powell's opinion hedged slightly, asserting that it was appropriate for schools to base their admissions decisions upon a quest for a "diverse student body." Powell's statement provided a justification that universities, including the University of Georgia, quickly seized upon as a cover for admitting black students with significantly lower qualifications than those of white or Asian students. Instead of ending campus affirmative action, *Bakke* became its license.

White guilt is a dangerous and addictive drug, and for 20-plus years the *Bakke* decision has supported stricken higher-education administrators in their habit. Meanwhile, the diversity shibboleth has taught a generation of young Americans that black students are more important for their presence in promotional brochure photographs than for their scholastic qualifications—an essentialization now as rife among black as among white students. This message ultimately perpetuates the very underperformance that has made the figleaf diversity notion necessary.

KIM KULISH/CORBIS SABA

The belief of these protesters in Sacramento that ending affirmative action will re-segregate colleges is nonsense.

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The very term "diversity" craftily overshoots the actual goal in question. Mormons, paraplegics, people from Alaska, lesbians, Ayn Randians, and poor whites exert little pull on the heartstrings of admissions committees so committed to making college campuses "look like America." The diversity that counts is brown-skinned minorities, especially African Americans.

Affirmative action at its inception in the late 1960s, when college administrators supposed that blacks' low representation on campuses was simply a matter of discrimination, meant nothing more than opening the doors and providing some remedial help where needed. But these efforts to bring in qualified blacks ran up against the uncomfortably small number of such people in an America just past legalized segregation. Faced with those who were admitted, university professors, not surprisingly, proved unequal to the task of undoing the effects of 14 years of poor preparation in the basic skills necessary for college course work. Meanwhile, the triumph of the separatist belief in black America that scholastic achievement was a "white" endeavor rather than an American one further decreased the numbers of black students qualified for top schools, and it holds down their numbers to this day.

As a result, though Justice Powell doubtless had intended his diversity imperative to play out as a mere thumb on the scale, giving the edge to a brown-skinned candidate where his qualifications were equal to a white-skinned one's, brute quota systems quickly came to reign on selective campuses. After my first year at Rutgers University, where I earned my bachelor's degree in the mid-1980s, it was painfully clear to me that the black students were generally a rung below the general preparation and performance level of the white ones. Certainly there were excellent black students—but they were exceptions rather than the rule. Even as a teenager unconcerned with social policy or admissions procedures, I couldn't but notice that black students had gotten in under some kind of quota system.

Rutgers top brass long maintained that race was used as just one of many factors, as the *Bakke* decision had directed. But a few years after I graduated, a student working in the admissions office blew the whistle, revealing that black students were put into a special pool and admitted according to significantly lower criteria than other students. Nor was Rutgers unique. Similar disclosures have emerged in school after school, including the University of California, the University of Texas, the University of Michigan, and, most recently, the University of Georgia. Even in their pro–affirmative action manifesto, *The Shape of the River*, William Bowen and Derek Bok admit—and painstakingly document—that this practice has been routine in selective universities across the nation for 30 years.

At the University of California at Berkeley, where I teach, the quota system was as obvious on the ground as it had been at Rutgers in the 1980s. One older white professor, an avowed leftist, confided in me that since the early 1970s black students had done badly in his classes so often that he had found himself viewing any black student who appeared on the first day of class as a potential problem. A white remedial-composition tutor observed that he had worked with so many minority students hopelessly underprepared for Berkeley-level work that he had found himself questioning the wisdom of racial preferences, despite his leftist persuasion. Professors across the country have expressed similar views to me.

Many would dismiss such observations as bias and stereotyping. The facts are otherwise. Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom note in *America in Black and White* that black Berkeley students who enrolled in 1988 had an average SAT score below 1,000, compared with white students' average of over 1,300. The highest quartile of black SAT scores in this class clustered at the bottom quarter of the SAT scores of all students. The high school grade average among black students was B-plus, rather than the straight-A average required of white students. Nor was this a mere Berzerk-ley aberration: in 1992, the gap in average SAT scores between black and white entrants was 150 points at Princeton, 171 at Stanford, 218 at Dartmouth, and 271 at Rice.

Graduation rates reflect this gulf in preparation. The Thernstroms document that, of the black students who entered Berkeley in 1988, 41 percent

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did not graduate, while only 16 percent of their white classmates did not. Bowen and Bok report that, at 28 top universities, black students in the class of 1989 were about three times more likely to drop out than white students.

Many ascribe these higher dropout rates to financial pressures rather than to the sharp deficits in high school grades and SAT scores. But the burden of proof is upon such people to identify just why grades and scores would *not* correlate significantly with a student's chances of finishing college. Few have any problem seeing a causal link here when it comes to white students.

"SAT scores *overpredict* black students' performance—black students do less well than their scores predict."

The argument that grades and scores are irrelevant to assessing a candidate defies both logic and experience. Consider the SAT. No one would argue that a student with a perfect SAT score is only a possible good match for Harvard or that a student with an abysmal SAT score was prime Harvard material. Precisely what, then, leads to the conclusion that SAT scores in between have no predictive power? In fact, as the Thernstroms show, graduation rates for black students who started at Berkeley in 1988 closely tracked their SAT scores: students with lower SATs were correspondingly less likely to get their degrees. Bowen and Bok acknowledge that SAT scores actually *overpredict* black students' college performance—that is, black students do less well than their scores would predict, not better.

Faced with such hard facts, diversity fans have asserted that leadership skills, helping to put together the high school yearbook, and spunk are as relevant to assessing a student's scholastic potential as . . . well, how they did academically in high school or how they scored on standardized tests. But aren't leadership skills and spunk equally prevalent among white students? Surely, blacks aren't innately perkier than whites. College-admissions committees that cheerily emphasize such extra-academic factors in evaluating black applicants basically are saying that blacks can't compete in the truly decisive arena: the classroom. In the name of diversity, black students find themselves patronizingly exempted from serious competition.

Can we justify this exemption from standards by saying that it leads to a larger good? Supporters of campus diversity have made three broad arguments to this effect. The first is that bending the admissions rules to ensure diversity helps foster an interracial fellowship that all students will carry with them into society after they graduate. I tried to hold on to this idea for years, but in the end it just doesn't wash.

In truth, "diverse" college campuses are among the most racially balkanized places in America. Separate black fraternities and sororities thrive. They first emerged in the early twentieth century, when white fraternities and sororities didn't welcome black applicants. Today, black Greek organizations are thoroughly unenthusiastic toward *whites*. Reinforcing this separatism, some universities host all-black graduation ceremonies—the idea, apparently, being that one's achievement is less a human or American one than a black one. In addition, black students typically cluster in their own section of the dining hall, throw their own parties, have their own theme houses, and leave college with a separatist ideology that they often didn't hold when they first arrived. Interracial fellowship this is not.

Nor is one likely to find much interracial camaraderie in African-American studies classes. Supporters of such classes say that they help blacks learn about their rich heritage, but in practice, they often double as exercises in stoking hatred of the White Man. At Stanford, I was a teaching assistant in a predominantly black class on Black English. In itself, the subject encompasses much more than mere street slang—extending to grammatical structure, literature, and educational issues. Yet, class discussion devolved into visceral dismissal of whites so often that one white student complained to the professor that he felt any opinions he ventured beyond

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genuflections to black victimhood were unwelcome—and he was right. When, in a course I taught at Berkeley on the history of black musical theater, a female white student observed that rap lyrics were misogynistic, several black students dressed her down so vehemently that they left her in tears.

Confronted with such racial enmity, white students understandably start shunning blacks. John H. Bunzel documents in *Race Relations on Campus: Stanford Students Speak Out* that white Stanford students who endured constant vague accusations of racism from black students often became less interested in interracial outreach than they had been as freshmen—a trend I've noticed on other campuses where I've taught or visited.

For the black student who doesn't toe the separatist line but really seeks interracial fellowship, university life can be uncomfortable. Blacks quickly discover that black authenticity means hunkering down behind a racial barricade, glaring angrily at the symbols of white "hegemony" that supposedly surround them, and believing that they are eternal victims in their own land. Edgy conversations with other black students who question the authenticity of one's own "blackness" become a regular feature of life. Bunzel reports that black Stanford students told him they were expected to "talk black, dress black, think black, and certainly date black." A black student who joins a traditionally white frat or sorority will face accusations that he or she is a self-hating sellout. A black acquaintance once told me that the overwhelming hostility she met with during her college years from black students scornful of her white friendships was far worse than any white racism she experienced at the time.

Scratch the surface, it seems, and diversity really means maintaining one's separatist missiles at the ready. After black University of California regent Ward Connerly helped launch an ultimately successful campaign to outlaw racial preferences in U-Cal admissions a few years back, some black locals formed a committee called "Citizens Against Ward Connerly." At one event, a committee representative joked, "Ward Connerly wants the University of California to be all vanilla—and I don't like vanilla." She sought audience approval, but given that at least half of her listeners were white, all she got was some nervous laughter. She quickly backtracked, adding, "I like to have some mix-ins—chips, nuts." Her initial remark, though, revealed the truth: the people so furiously committed to campus diversity aren't interested in a color-blind America. Their real goal is to ensure that the privileges of a college education don't distract black students from the urgent task of keeping the fires of black alienation burning.

Since the notion that diversity encourages interracial bonding is so patently false, its defenders frequently make a second, somewhat different, argument. Racial preferences in admissions, they maintain, are crucial in order to ensure, if not fellowship, then at least *exposure* to different ethnic and racial groups, teaching a valuable lesson about the many equally valid viewpoints in a multicultural society. This view received official *imprimatur* in Powell's *Bakke* concurrence, where the justice asserted that universities would benefit from selecting "those students [i.e., dark-skinned minorities] who will contribute most to the robust exchange of ideas."

Given that *Bakke* concerned a medical school, just how being black qualifies one to make especially vigorous observations about surgical incisions and metabolic pathways is unclear, but never mind. The real, if implicit, assumption behind the exposure idea is that whites will learn about—and learn to respect—blacks from the other side of the tracks, whom they supposedly find so alien, despicable, and threatening. But in practice, what white students often learn at a university that lets in blacks under the bar is that blacks may not be as sharp as whites. It's difficult to imagine how even the most well-intentioned white students could have avoided such a conclusion at Rutgers when I studied there in the 1980s.

More fundamentally, the "exposure" argument rests on a falsehood: that black students typically come from disadvantaged circumstances, unfamiliar to their white classmates. In fact, at selective schools, inner-city blacks have been vanishingly rare since the late 1960s, when a handful of top schools briefly—and unsuccessfully—experimented with admitting unqualified urban blacks to see if they could cope. But among black students in the last class admitted to Berkeley under the old racial preferences regime, more than 65 percent came

BURT GLINN/MAGNUM PHOTOS

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Integration—not the separatism of today's campuses—inspired the civil rights pioneers.

from households earning at least $40,000 a year; the parents of 40 percent earned at least $60,000 yearly. Of blacks admitted in 1989 to the 28 selective universities that Bowen and Bok survey, just 14 percent came from homes earning $22,000 or less.

Precisely what traits do middle-class black kids display that a white student must learn about so that he won't wash out in the management job he starts after graduation? I've found that middle-class black students asked to list a few such traits usually draw a blank. Even if many blacks from the 'hood *did* show up at selective schools, however, why would learning about their cultural traits be vital to white students' education? In African-American studies courses on the same campuses, blacks regularly—and rightly—decry the stereotype that all African Americans are poor. Surely a firsthand, four-year tutorial in the vibrancy of ghetto life would simply reinforce that stereotype. Poverty is a tragedy, not a life-style.

If neither the hope for greater interracial harmony nor the idea of whites learning from blacks justifies diversity policies, there is, finally, the moral argument that blacks deserve compensation for their tragic history. Centuries of disenfranchisement and segregation bar most blacks from really qualifying for top schools, affirmative action's defenders charge, so it's the right thing to do to let them in through the back door. "How, without racial preferences, can we make up for the fact that whites benefited from socially ingrained preferences for centuries?" furiously asked one black man at a talk I gave recently. Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer, reversing his longtime opposition to race-based admissions, claims that whites "owe" blacks due to past injustices. For all their sincerity, however, people like Glazer don't understand that this tit-for-tat defense of racial preferences bars the only path that can lead us beyond our racial dilemmas.

It's indisputable that historical disenfranchisement has left many blacks ill equipped to compete even when ladders to success beckon, as they do today—partly because of the economic and social obstacles to achievement that disadvantaged status entails and, even more, because long-term oppression helped create a black cultural identity opposed to mainstream success. For blacks to rise to the top, they must learn new skills and cultivate

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It's not "diversity" when African-American students huddle together in their own section of the dining hall or in all-black dorms like this one at USC and many others like it across the nation.

new attitudes. Those who've grown up under conditions that don't offer direct paths to accomplishment have the task—unfair, but hardly limited to blacks—of discovering the knack of turning lemons into lemonade, as oppressed groups in America have done for centuries. A group that believes that mainstream achievement is inauthentic will have to refashion its self-conception if it is ever to get ahead in the only society it will ever call home.

Lowered standards are antithetical to both of these vital goals. A fundamental tenet of economics and psychology is that most people will do their best only if they have the incentive to do so. Lowered standards have robbed blacks of that incentive. One can only learn to ride a bicycle by mastering the subtle muscular poise of the endeavor oneself; as long as the training wheels remain on, one isn't really riding the bike.

The point here isn't moral but logical: black students will only reach their full potential if the affirmative-action safety net is withdrawn and they're *required* to strive for excellence. Perhaps the most sobering reality black Americans face today is that even our tragic history cannot exempt us from this hard truth of the human condition. Asian students have never had the illusion that there was any path up other than showing their best stuff, come hell or high water, which is why so many of them excel. Students, though, who daily hear the message, "You only have to do pretty well to get into a top school" will—a few naturally gifted stars excepted—only do pretty well. To elevate diversity over true excellence condemns black students to mediocrity and is, quite simply, racist.

To call today's university administrations racist may seem a bit strong. Yet what else should we make of university officials' apparent belief that blacks are the only group in American history incapable of overcoming social and historical obstacles? So troubled is University of California president Richard Atkinson by the fall in black and Hispanic admissions to his flagship Berkeley and UCLA campuses since the end of racial preferences in the system that he has proposed

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eliminating the SAT from admissions requirements altogether.

Never mind that, after the overturning of preferences, black admissions fell *only* on these two top campuses, rising at several other UC schools; and that the University of California is now trying diligently to prepare minority students in middle and high schools throughout the state to submit competitive dossiers to UC. Atkinson is so skeptical that the new race-blind regime will ever bear fruit that he doesn't consider it worth waiting to see what *might* happen over time. Instead, all he sees is the "re-segregation" that black and Latino faculty and administrators and their white fellow travelers warned about when the battle over preferences was raging. Implicitly, he seems to think that Berkeley and UCLA are the only California colleges worth attending, so that black students who don't get into them have no choice but to fail.

PERRY C. RIDDLE/*LOS ANGELES TIMES*

To elevate diversity over true excellence condemns black students to mediocrity and is, quite simply, racist.

This is offensive nonsense. Sure, over the past few years, many black kids who would have gone to Berkeley under the old system now attend UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis, or other solid second-rank schools. But so what? They're much more likely to thrive on these campuses than if they found themselves, unprepared, at legendarily demanding Berkeley and UCLA. And isn't Atkinson's conviction that the new system re-creates the era of Orville Faubus strangely dismissive of California's non-elite state schools for the man entrusted with their stewardship?

Equally important, under the new race-blind system, black students know that they are as qualified academically as other students on campus. Armed with a confidence based on reality, black students will be more comfortable in white company and less likely to compensate for feelings of inferiority by retreating to their own section of the dining hall.

Affirmative-action supporters retort that underqualified black students must be admitted to top schools, because the prestige of such institutions and the connections one makes attending them are essential to success in later life. This claim doesn't stand up to the slightest scrutiny. Journalist James Fallows notes in a recent piece in *The Atlantic* that "the four richest people in America, all of whom made rather than inherited their wealth, are a dropout from Harvard, a dropout from the University of Illinois, a dropout from Washington State University, and a graduate of the University of Nebraska." Top universities, he adds, rarely show up on the résumés of congressmen, Nobel laureates, industry leaders, and even U.S. presidents. As for blacks, Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom show that, of today's African-American congressmen, army officers, recent Ph.D.s, MacArthur Foundation genius-award winners, and top business officials, only a tiny sliver attended elite colleges.

None of this is rocket science. Every college administrator knows that diversity is really a code word for "at least 5 percent black faces with a good sprinkling of Latinos," and that this outcome is attainable only through quotas. Racial preferences continue to receive protection from the diversity fig leaf. It's a powerful rhetorical weapon. The question, "Aren't you in favor of diversity?" today means, "Don't you like black people?"—and nothing chills most thinking white Americans more than the fear of being deemed racist. At the same time, many blacks cheer preferences under the misguided impression that racism is the only possible cause of unequal performance, and thus they remain blind to the importance of the perseverance and individual initiative that will truly succeed in fostering black excellence.

A university culture truly committed to erasing the sins of the past would champion diversity in its true sense, infusing its discourse on race with a range of views wider than variations on victimhood. Since 1978, diversity has served as a flimsy and evasive perversion of justice. It has helped no one, least of all black students. It's high time we swept it into the dustbin of history.

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GEDs Aren't Worth the Paper They're Printed On

GED holders do much worse in later life than high school grads. It's time for some truth in testing.

Jay P. Greene

If you believe the official U.S. government education statistics, nearly nine Americans out of ten graduate from high school, and the rate has been moving steadily upward for two decades. Alas, this happy scenario is a complete illusion. The real percentage of kids graduating is much lower—dismally low for blacks and Hispanics—and things are getting worse, not better. The conjuring trick that makes the real graduation rates disappear is to treat the General Education Development (GED) credential as equivalent to a standard high school diploma. But the GED isn't the "high school equivalency diploma" that many of its recipients mistakenly call it—far from it.

The GED test got its start in World War II as a way to help out returning veterans who had entered military service before getting their high school diplomas. By passing the new government-approved test, designed by the creators of the American College Testing Program and the National Assessment of Educational Progress, these older students, without trudging back to high school, could prove to colleges or to prospective employers that they had sufficient mastery of required high school subjects to qualify for a diploma.

Today, the GED's *raison d'être* is essentially the same as it was in the 1940s—to give those diploma-less students who deserve it a way to pursue educational or job opportunities that require a secondary education. But the clientele, mostly high school dropouts in their late teens or early twenties, is far more dysfunctional than the solid vets of decades ago. "Some students," says Sarah Marvin, a GED preparatory course instructor in Davie, Florida, "dropped out of high school because their mothers threw them out of the house for a boyfriend: the mother might seem too old by having a 16-year-old kid around." Others, she adds, simply messed up and need a second chance. Carlos (by teacher request, I have changed most student names), a GED student at Sheridan Technical

Graphs by Alberto Mena

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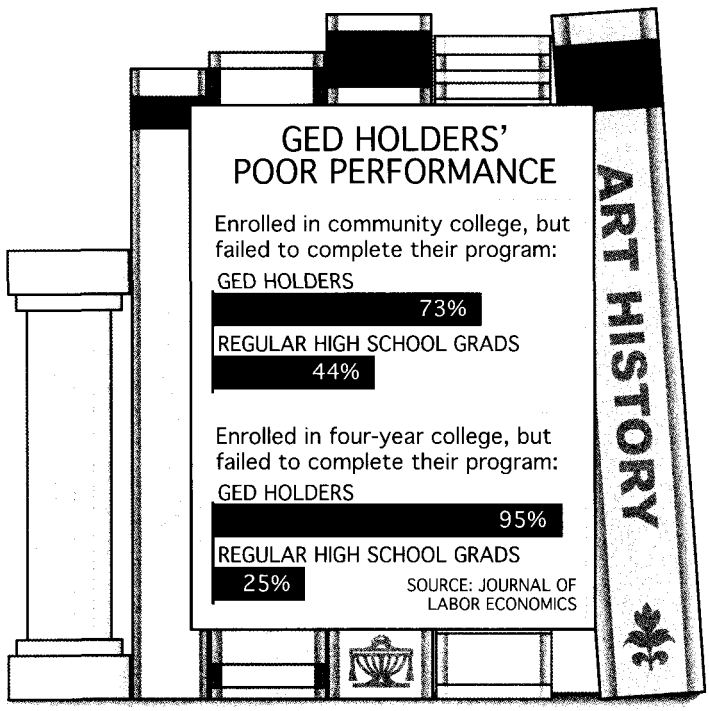
Center in the nearby town of Hollywood, is a case in point: he was cruising through high school, getting As and Bs, but grew bored and quit. Other GED students I spoke with left school after their families ran into economic difficulties, or dropped out because of an unexpected pregnancy.

Some of these students will no doubt use the credential as a springboard to future accomplishment. New Yorker Jane Berger, to take a striking GED success story, dropped out of high school in the 1960s after going astray as a teenager. By 1990, older and wiser, she wanted to apply to Hunter College in Manhattan to work toward her B.A., and so needed a GED. (In order to tap federal funds, even schools with *de facto* open enrollment like Hunter require the credential in the absence of a regular diploma.) Passing the test with ease—"for the most part, the answers were in the questions," she says—she eventually completed her Hunter degree and now coordinates research projects at the Rockefeller Institute.



Even though GED holders fare poorly compared with regular high school grads in further education (above) and in lifetime earnings, . . .

But Berger is far from typical. For most GED holders, the credential makes little real difference in life outcomes. Nobel Prize–winning economist James Heckman and colleague Stephen Cameron have found GED holders to be "statistically indistinguishable" from high school dropouts: they're not significantly more likely to land a job or to have higher hourly wages. Other studies find that GED holders do slightly better than dropouts but still lousy compared with regular high school grads—who themselves, in today's knowledge-based economy, earn only 54 percent of what college grads make, according to 1999 Bureau of Labor Statistics figures.

The GED holders who go on to post-secondary education (about 60 percent) also compare poorly with high school grads who do so. Almost three-quarters of GED holders who enroll in community colleges fail to finish their degrees, compared with 44 percent of high school graduates. In a four-year college, the prospects are even grimmer: unlike Jane Berger, an astonishing 95 percent of GED holders don't finish, compared with 25 percent of high school grads.

Clearly, the GED doesn't come close to being equivalent to a high school diploma in terms of life chances. But *why* do GED holders fare so poorly? One reason is that jumping the GED hurdle—the test is actually five exams, covering literature, math, science, social studies, and writing, and lasting seven and a half hours from start to finish—requires scant knowledge of the academic content that even our knowledge-lite high schools manage to get across. The GED Testing Service, the national organization that designs and administers the GED, has made it remarkably easy to pass,

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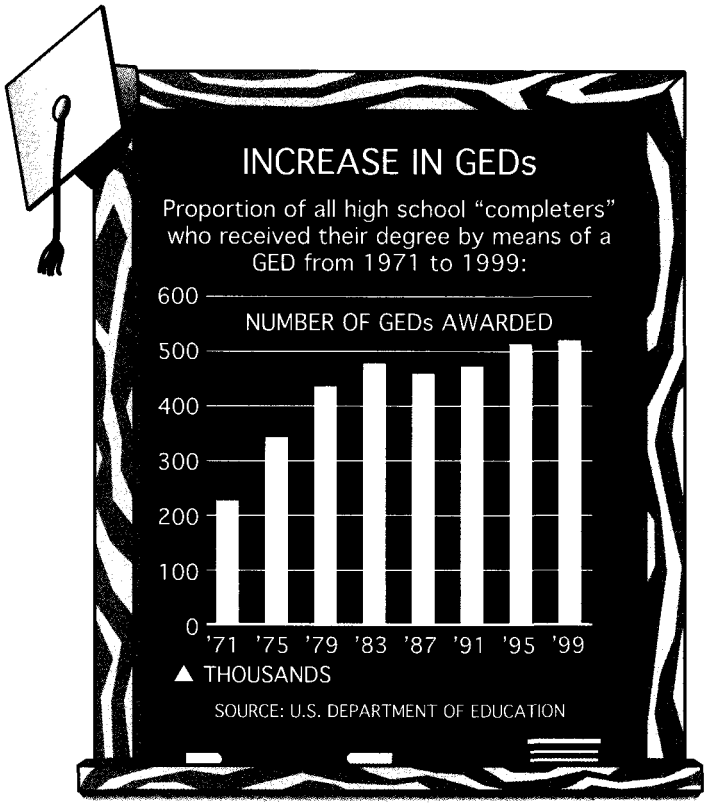

. . . the number of GEDs awarded increased 127 percent in the three decades between 1971 and 1999, . . .

and about 60 percent of the 833,000 or so students taking it yearly do. "It's the Wizard of Oz; they give you a piece of paper," recently noted a skeptical Lois Quinn, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, who has written a critical history of the GED.

The GED test taker doesn't need to know much factual information. A history question on the social studies component, for example, doesn't require him to know that most U.S. immigrants between 1920 and 1929 came from Europe; it only asks him to identify this fact correctly in a multiple-choice question after reading a short, simple paragraph about it. The exam tests only basic reading comprehension, in other words, not historical knowledge. Science questions often consist of interpreting a graph or a chart correctly rather than knowing anything about chemical properties or physical laws. The literature exam, like its social studies counterpart, tests reading ability, not whether the student has ever read *The Great Gatsby* or *Moby Dick*.

True, the GED's math section does require some factual knowledge, but the requirement isn't demanding. A typical question might ask students to identify how many feet and inches equal 45 inches; the test taker merely needs to remember how many inches are in a foot. Plus, students can use calculators on all computation questions. The writing section mostly asks students to choose from among different versions of a sentence the one that's grammatically correct. The most intimidating part of the section is the essay composition.

The grading of the GED is anything but tough. To pass the math component, for example, a student needs to answer only 22 out of 56 questions correctly. If he just guessed, odds are he'd get 11 right. On the social studies, literature, and science exams, he needs to answer only about one-third of the questions correctly to pass. Making the GED easier still, test takers can retake each subject exam as many times as they want, until they get over the hurdle. Though the GED will be updated in 2002, it won't get any harder to pass.

Small wonder that students don't need to go through anything like a full-fledged program of study to get their GEDs. The average GED recipient passes the test after just 30 hours of class time and study. If that same student dropped out of school before the tenth grade (as many school leavers do), he would have lost more than 850 hours of class time. The Jobs Corps found that GED students with a fifth-grade education—that's right, *fifth*-grade—could pass the test after 200 hours of instruction.

GED student Carlos admits the road to the GED is a lot shorter than the one to high school graduation. "In high school, you spend time on something like Thomas Jefferson and stuff," he says matter-of-factly, "but we don't need that." Recalls GED holder and Hunter College grad Jane Berger, "The GED definitely didn't test the material covered in high

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school." Melinda, another student at Sheridan Tech, agrees. "Everyone here just wants to pass the test and get on with it," she stresses.

Melinda's impatience points to a second reason that GED recipients do so much worse than regular high school grads. Preparing for the GED does not offer the kind of social discipline—the lessons in perseverance and self-control—that one gains by sticking it out in high school, however much it drives you nuts.

Janice Laurence of the Human Resources Research Organization, a longtime critic of the GED, calls this process of sticking it out in high school "seat time," and she sees it as crucial to life success. In high school, you learn to put up with all sorts of irritations, from mind-numbing boredom to taking an exam you don't feel like studying for or dealing with a teacher who treats you like a moron—or is one herself. "To graduate," Laurence tells the *Chicago Tribune*, "students must learn to cooperate with their instructors and get along with their peers." The kind of maturity and tolerance for rules that one develops in submitting to such common trials proves invaluable later on in higher education and in the workforce, where unwelcome tasks and maddening people can be regular facts of life.

GED preparatory courses don't offer anything comparable. GED students come when they want, leave when they want, and work at their own pace; they lack formal instruction, assignments, and due dates. "They're adults," remarks Leo Seewaldt, a GED instructor at Sheridan Tech. "I can't make them be here if they don't want to." This loosey-goosey approach might make it easier for some motivated students to jump the GED hurdle swiftly and move on to college or work. But it's a recipe for further failure for the many GED seekers who are poorly socialized and lacking in structure and discipline already: economist Heckman has found that GED recipients admitted on a survey to higher rates of vandalism, shoplifting, drug use, and fighting at school than did diploma holders and high school dropouts.

Of course, it's possible that GED holders dropped out of high school in the first place and then don't do as well as high school grads in later life because they are not very smart. On the Armed Forces Qualifying Test, which measures both academic knowledge and cognitive ability, the average GED recipient gets a grade of 65, compared with the average high school graduate's 76 and the average high school dropout's 46. Because GED holders scored so poorly compared with grads—and because a disastrous 37 percent of them were dropping out of military training, compared with a similarly dismal 39 percent of high school dropouts but only 20 percent of diploma holders—armed-forces recruiters have stopped treating the GED as equivalent to a regular high school diploma.

"GED recipients admit to higher rates of vandalism, drug use, and fighting at school than diploma holders."

In all likelihood, GED holders' relatively limited life chances result from a combination of all three of the above causes—lack of information, lack of social skills, and low I.Q.—in unknown proportions.

Calling the GED the equivalent of a standard high school diploma isn't just a problem of semantics. It has profoundly distorted the way we calculate and interpret education statistics.

In one bit of legerdemain, some states and school districts with sky-high dropout rates partly hide their problems by refusing to call GED-seekers, many of who will never get their credential, dropouts. The Dallas Independent School district, for example, claims an annual dropout rate of just 1.3 percent. But the district had nearly 10,000 eighth-grade students in 1993 and only 5,659 graduates in 1998, when those eighth-graders should have graduated. Controlling for student population fluctuations, my calculations show the real dropout rate is close to 50 percent: the 1.3 percent figure is risible. New York City pulls the same scam. By refusing to count GED students as dropouts, it comes up with

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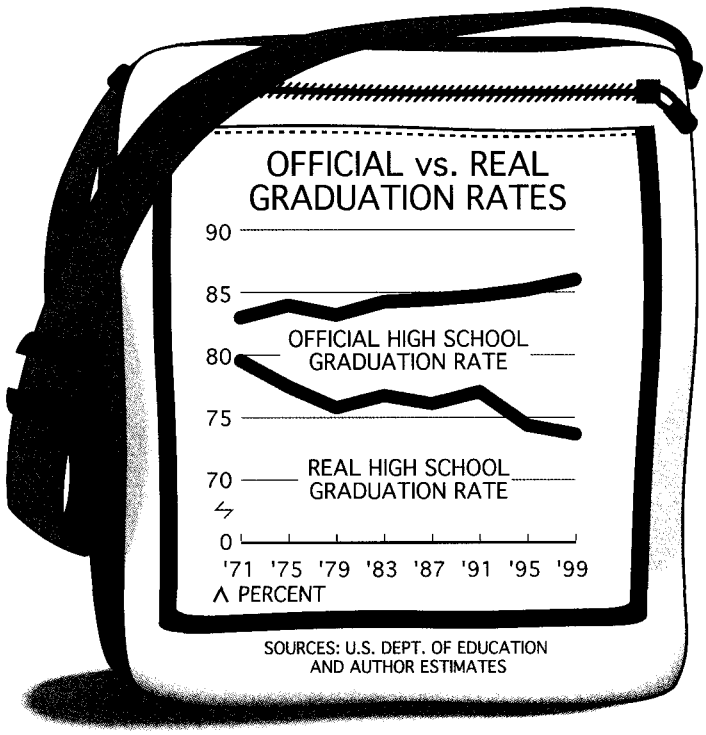

. . . masking a decline in the real high school graduation rate, since GEDs are counted in the official total.

a 19.3 percent dropout rate. The true rate is much worse, almost 50 percent.

Another example: when the U.S. Census announces that 87 percent of all U.S. students complete high school, this figure winds up repeated by the Department of Education, education researchers, and school officials as proof of a generally decent state of affairs in the nation's schools. But if we subtract the GED (and other alternative degrees) from the census numbers, we find that only 77 percent of students graduate. For minority students, the percentages are even lower, with just 73 percent of blacks and 55 percent of Hispanics gaining standard diplomas.

Worse, these numbers are almost certainly too high. The census assumes that respondents grasp the difference between the GED and a regular diploma and honestly describe which one, if either, household members have obtained—a dubious supposition, given the widely perpetuated falsehood that they're basically the same. Compare eighth-grade enrollments in the fall of 1993 with diplomas from 1998 (when those students should have been graduating), and then correct for changes in the size of the student population, and you get a more accurate national graduation rate of 74 percent, a black rate of 56 percent, and a Hispanic rate of 54 percent—a far cry from what the government numbers convey.

These real graduation rates are deplorable, but the trend over time is even more dismaying, since it is dipping. As the number of GEDs has skyrocketed, going from 227,000 in 1970 to 516,000 in 1999, the number of students—high school and GED added together—has stayed roughly the same, which means that the percentage of graduation-age students who have received a regular diploma has been gradually declining since the late 1960s.

here's some evidence to suggest that the easier GED route may even be *causing* some students to drop out. GED student Carlos tells me that the existence of the test played a central role in his decision to leave high school in 1998. "I saw some friends get their GED, and I thought: 'Why should I wait around here? I'll just get my GED.'" A few years later, he regrets his decision. "I should've stayed in school. It's hard coming back after being out of the routine, and I've forgotten a bunch of stuff." Fellow GED-seeker Melinda also says that the GED was a big factor in her leaving school. Her family, struggling economically, was in danger of losing the family van. "I said, 'No way: that's *our* van,'" she recalls. "I told my mom that I was going to go to work so that we could keep it. She told me not to, but I said it was okay—I could always get my GED." That was seven years ago.

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Melinda is struggling for the third time to start a GED prep course. She's been unable to stick with previous classes, she says, because she has been too tired after long days at the copy shop where she works.

The existing data support these students' stories. The Urban Institute's Duncan Chaplin found that the easier a state makes it to get a GED—procedures differ from state to state—the higher the dropout rate. States with restrictions, such as making students wait longer after dropping out of school before they can obtain the credential, had lower rates.

The mere existence of the GED, in other words, appears to have altered susceptible students' behavior. If the GED truly were the equivalent of a standard diploma, this unintended consequence wouldn't be so worrisome. That it is not means that the GED may be hurting some of the very people it is intended to help.

The percentage of graduation-age students who receive a regular diploma has been declining since the late 1960s.

The GED establishment is complicit in establishing the myth of equivalence. Joan Auchter, executive director of the GED Testing Service, claims that "the only thing [the test] can do is certify that people have an adequate understanding of a body of academic knowledge in the major content areas of high school"—though to suggest, as this statement does, that the GED exam in any way covers the standard high school curriculum is misleading in the extreme. But Auchter, in another mood, seems aware of the vast gulf between the GED and the high school diploma. She is blunt about how GED holders ought to count in education statistics: "They are dropouts," she says. "That is what they are. They are dropouts that went on to get a certificate."

If Auchter seems equivocal, the GED Testing Service website borders on the deceptive. It reports that "one out of every seven people who graduate each year earns that diploma by passing the GED tests"—completely obscuring the distinction between graduating high school and getting a GED. Even worse, it boasts that "more than 95 percent of employers in the U.S. consider GED graduates the same as traditional high school graduates in regard to hiring, salary, and opportunity for advancement"—a claim sharply at odds with everything that we know about GED holders in the workplace. The site proudly claims comedian Bill Cosby and Dave Thomas (founder of Wendy's restaurant chain) as GEDs who've excelled.

A major force behind the desire to declare the GED equal to a normal high school degree is that everyone involved in the process, from the GED bureaucrats to the instructors to the students themselves, believes that obtaining the alternative degree boosts the self-esteem of recipients. It is perhaps the ultimate social promotion in an educational culture of social promotion. GED instructor Seewaldt holds up a copy of the diploma the students get when they pass. "See," he says, pointing to the lettering. "It doesn't say GED anywhere on it. It says HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA." Though the prospect of getting a "real" diploma pleases students, one wonders whether the self-esteem produced wouldn't be more lasting and meaningful if the degree demanded greater skills and correlated more strongly with completing college and boosting earnings.

How might we devise a system that offers students a second chance but that doesn't obfuscate reality or entice students to drop out? For starters, we should make the GED harder. To discourage students from dropping out in the belief that they can just pick up a GED, we might also want to follow some states and require a national increase in the minimum age for taking the test, up from the current floor of 16, and lengthen the waiting period before a student leaving high school can take it. Above all, though, we need to be honest about what the GED is—a poor substitute for the real thing.

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Where Dr. King Went Wrong

Joel Schwartz

A few years before his tragic death in 1968, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. famously had a change of heart about the proper cure for persistent black poverty. He began to look increasingly to big government to help poor blacks, even though throughout his life he'd been an advocate—indeed a preacher—of the virtues of self-help. It was a change of worldview that was dead wrong, however understandable it might have been as a response to the grim reality then unfolding among America's inner-city blacks. It was a mistake that had terrible consequences for black America and for the nation as a whole.

King believed in self-help because he grew up in a deeply religious environment that nourished it. Southern black church leaders like King's father and maternal grandfather, both of whom preceded him as Baptist ministers, tended to stress the economic, educational, and moral self-improvement of the black community. Encouraging such striving, they felt, was the best way for poor blacks to escape poverty and integrate themselves fully into American social and political life. These were the goals that King's forebears—and King himself—correctly sought.

King's father, Martin Luther Sr. (or "Daddy" King), personally exemplified this classically American spirit of self-improvement. Son of an impoverished sharecropper, Daddy King relied on a muscular work ethic, spartan self-discipline, and a devotion to education to propel himself into the black middle class. As a teenager, to help his parents, he'd work double shifts firing engines in rail yards. Later, he worked an array of jobs, from making auto tires to driving trucks—anything to get ahead. "As far as earning myself some money was concerned," he later wrote, "I wasn't worried because I'd never been afraid of hard work." Thriftiness enabled Daddy King to save enough money to pay for evening classes at Bryant Preparatory School in Atlanta. He started in 1920, at age 20, at a fifth-grade level, and graduated in five years, going on to Morehouse College, where he obtained a theology degree in 1930.

Daddy King instilled in his children the self-help ethos that brought him success. "[C]ompared to the modern home environment," he recalled, "we ran a very tight ship." "The children got to school on time every morning; they did homework as soon as they reached home in the afternoon, then chores. After supper, they did some studying, then we had prayers." He took pride, too, that his family had "never lived in a rented house" or "ridden too long in a car on which payment was due." Reminiscing about his boyhood, Martin Luther Jr. remarked that though his father "never made more than an ordinary salary," he knew "the art of saving and budgeting. He always had sense enough not to live beyond his means."

Guided by his father's example, King celebrated self-help as central to the project to integrate blacks from the moment he became a public figure, and he continued to celebrate it through much of his career, though in a considerably muted way after his turn to big government. In its concrete details, King's message of personal responsibility and individual and communal striving offers a time-tested recipe for getting ahead, as the success of countless immigrants, including African and West Indian blacks, proves beyond doubt.

The message centers on the work ethic. King rejected the common liberal view that jobs requiring minimal or no skills (those most likely to be available to the poor) were "dead end" jobs and therefore not worth taking. "Whatever your life's work is, do it well," he advised. "If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, like Shakespeare wrote poetry, like Beethoven composed music." King stuck with this stance despite criticism from trusted advisors like Bayard Rustin, who held that "to want a Cadillac is not un-American; to push a cart in the garment center is."

Black workers should hold themselves to universal standards of excellence, King strongly

For most of his ministry, Martin Luther King preached a message of self-help.

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believed. In a 1957 address to the Montgomery Improvement Association (a forerunner of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference), he told his black audience to "set out to do a good job," not "a good Negro job." Three years later, he was even more adamant: "We must seek to do our life's work so well that nobody could do it better. The Negro who seeks to be merely a good Negro, whatever he is, has already flunked his matriculation examination for entrance into the university of integration." Even the later King touted this line. "[W]e must work assiduously to aspire to excellence," he proclaimed in 1967.

For King, the ideal of hard work, meeting high universal standards, had to be central to the education of young blacks. Anything less, he correctly reasoned, would trap them in second-class status. King would despise a multi-culti educational fad like Ebonics ("black English"), designed to make poorly educated black kids feel good without challenging them. He excoriated schoolteachers "who can't even speak the English language" and wouldn't know a verb "if it was as big as that table." "For a college graduate to be standing up talking about 'you is,'" he charged, "there is no excuse for it." He added angrily: "And some of these people are teaching our children and crippling our children."

Thrift was a second key virtue that King thought could help blacks propel themselves into the American mainstream. In his 1957 talk, he urged his listeners: "Let's live within our means. Save our money and invest it in meaningful ends." Blacks shouldn't spend more than they could afford on houses and cars, he counseled, and they should especially "stop wasting money on frivolities," such as "all these alcoholic beverages." "It would be one of the tragedies of this century," he maintained, "if it is revealed that the Negroes spent more money for frivolities than we spent for the cause of freedom and justice and for meaningful ends." Here, too, King persisted in his views even after his big-government turn. In his 1967 book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, he called for "the development of habits of thrift and techniques of wise investment," so that "the Negro will be doing his share to grapple with his problem of economic deprivation."

King practiced what he preached, as was clear when he went on trial in Alabama for tax evasion in 1960. To virtually everyone's amazement, an all-white southern jury found him not guilty, largely because he kept a diary carefully detailing his speaking fees and travel expenses. King's record keeping, explains historian Taylor Branch, was "a habit drilled into him from childhood by Daddy King, who taught that keeping a penny-conscious budget was the first rule of frugality."

Joining work and thrift in King's self-help vision was a no-nonsense stance toward black crime and disorderly behavior. If blacks were to integrate themselves into America, King felt, black crime rates had to fall. "Let's be honest with ourselves and say that . . . our standards have lagged behind at many points," he declared in 1957. "Negroes constitute ten percent of the population of New York City, and yet they commit thirty-five percent of the crime," he observed.

A decade later, with America's black ghettos becoming so dangerous that a child born and raised in one had worse chances of survival than a U.S. soldier in World War II, King called for a moral renewal in the black community that might bring the chaos under control. "We can begin a constructive program which will vigorously seek to improve our personal standards," he said. "It is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of high maturity, to rise to the level of self-criticism," King declared. "Through group unity we must convey to one another that our women must be respected, and that life is too precious to be destroyed in a Saturday night brawl, or a gang execution."

For King, what today we call "faith-based institutions" would be indispensable in this project of moral uplift—after all, he was a clergyman, who understood the traditional moral authority of the black churches. "Through community agencies and religious institutions, we must develop a positive program through which Negro youth can become adjusted to urban living and improve their general level of behavior."

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King learned his ethic of personal responsibility and hard work from his preacher-father, "Daddy" King.

A fourth part of King's self-help message was his stress on the fundamental importance of the traditional family. However helpful hard work, thrift, and law-abiding behavior might be to future black success, King felt, the breakdown of the black family, the institution that most nurtured the strength of character that is the key to self-help, threatened to undermine any gains blacks made. "[N]othing is so much needed," King wrote in 1967, "as a secure family life for a people seeking to rise out of poverty and backwardness." King himself wasn't that much of a success as a family man; we know both from FBI wiretaps and from the testimony of friends and associates about his compulsive philandering. But if he didn't walk the correct walk, he talked the right talk, from early on. "[W]e have eight times more illegitimacy than white persons," a troubled King reminded black listeners as far back as the late 1950s. And

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Late in his tragically short life, King fell silent about non-violence, self-reliance, and integration.

blacks "must work to improve these standards," he insisted.

Late in his career, King offered a powerfully plausible analysis of the forces conspiring to weaken the black family. Slavery was partly to blame, he argued, beginning "with the breakup of families on the coasts of Africa" and continuing on the plantation, "where the institution of legal marriage for slaves did not exist." These "shattering blows," King argued, made the black family "fragile, deprived and often psychopathic." Intensifying slavery's evil effects were potent anti-family forces at work in American culture as a whole during the permissive 1960s. "History continues to mock the Negro today, because just as he needs ever greater family integrity, severe strains are assailing family life in the white community," King wrote. "In short, the larger society is not at this time a constructive educational force for the Negro."

King's fears over black family breakdown even led him to become one of the few civil rights leaders not to reject out-

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right Daniel Patrick Moynihan's controversial 1965 report, *The Negro Family*, which warned about the rising illegitimacy rate among blacks (at the time 25 percent, well below today's rate). In fact, without mentioning the report directly, King sympathetically discussed its contents in a talk shortly after its publication, saying that family collapse threatened the "very survival" of American blacks. He dismissed the views of "a good many writers who have tartly denigrated the role of the family."

King's belief in the virtues of self-help made him critical of welfare. To begin with, he didn't like the way it then operated. The system came laden with perverse incentives, King complained in the mid-sixties. Consider the regulations that "deprive a family of Aid to Dependent Children if a male resides in the house," he suggested. Don't such rules entice a man "to abandon his family" so that he is in effect "coerced into irresponsibility"? Welfare regulations, by placing stringent limits on the assets a recipient could possess, also sapped the work ethic vital to self-help. "If you receive public aid in Chicago, you cannot own property, not even an automobile, so you are condemned to the jobs . . . closest to your home," King insisted. A smart welfare system would shore up two-parent families and back the efforts of recipients to find work—basically the goals welfare reformers have pursued over the last decade.

But further, King's dislike of specific welfare rules extended to wider misgivings about welfare itself. He was aware of the growing problem of welfare dependency among blacks. He pointed out in 1957 that, in St. Louis, "the Negroes constitute twenty-six percent of the population, and yet seventy-six percent of the persons on the list for [A]id to [D]ependent [C]hildren are Negroes." Several years later, he regretted that "56 percent of Negro children at some point in their lives have been recipients of public aid."

But if King fretted over dependency, he never gave a full-bore criticism of the welfare system. Never did he echo Franklin D. Roosevelt's argument that government handouts are a potential "narcotic" that can result in "moral disintegration," robbing welfare clients of their "self-respect, their self-reliance and courage and determination."

Such a criticism would have been increasingly unlikely after 1965. From then on, King started to downplay his self-help message and began to propose instead a massive swelling of government programs as the best solution to black poverty.

Why did King change his approach? One reason was growing pessimism that a capitalist economy could still provide the kind of low-skill jobs that Daddy King had relied on to work his way up. In a posthumous publication, King contended—quite mistakenly, we can see in hindsight—that the U.S. economy "began to take a turn for the worse" after 1964, largely because "automation began to cut into our jobs very badly, and this snuffed out the few sparks of hope the black people had begun to nurture." In 1965, he asserted: "[T]housands of jobs a week are disappearing in the wake of automation and other production efficiency techniques." Without jobs, a self-help ethos clearly wasn't sufficient.

A deeper reason for the change in worldview, however, may be that, as King went north and saw up close the emergence of the black underclass, he simply lost heart. Blacks in northern cities like Chicago, where he and his entourage started working in 1965, were far more demoralized and dysfunctional than southern blacks, King discovered. The moral influence of the black church was much weaker than in the South. Illegitimacy, welfare dependency, and criminality were more prevalent than in the South, with its much stronger bourgeois values. No longer, explains historian Christopher Lasch, did King address "a constituency that cared to hear about self-help, the dignity of labor, the importance of strong families." King's associate Hosea Williams put it bluntly: "We're used to working [in the South] with people who want to be freed."

Shortly before his assassination, King even began to speak of a black "underclass"—"an underclass that is not a working class." In King's view, those who belonged to this group, "alienated from the routines of work," lacked the "habits of discipline" that enable someone to succeed in the workplace. How could

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self-help be the road to success for people who seemed bent on destroying themselves?

The only answer the later King could see to these economic and social problems was for government to step in and make things better. "[T]he ultimate way to diminish our problems of crime, family disorganization, illegitimacy and so forth will have to be found through a government program to help the frustrated Negro male find his true masculinity by placing him on his own two economic feet," King argued—implying, in a quasi-Marxist vein, that the purported failures of the capitalist economy had caused the pathologies of the black underclass. King scorned Lyndon Johnson's multi-billion-dollar War on Poverty because it didn't spend *enough*. The president's "so-called poverty program," King scoffed, was "not even a good skirmish against poverty." Though he still encouraged self-help from time to time, King now openly rejected it too. "When [the Negro] seeks opportunity, he is told, in effect, to lift himself up by his own bootstraps, advice which does not take into account the fact that he is barefoot." What blacks really needed, the new King claimed, were government-provided jobs for those who wanted to work and a guaranteed income for all, regardless of whether they worked or not.

This later King was a dispiriting sight compared with the inspiring figure behind the early civil rights movement. Not only had King seemingly lost faith in self-help. In addition, as Daniel Patrick Moynihan attested, he no longer was willing to defend his early integrationist ideals when they came under attack. In 1968, Moynihan attended a meeting with King and other black leaders devoted to *The Negro Family*. "The leadership of the meeting was in the hands of near demented Black militants who consistently stated one untruth after another," he recalled. King sat there throughout, Moynihan lamented, "unwilling . . . to say a word in support of non-violence, integration, or peaceableness."

King's new worldview got things exactly—tragically—wrong. No expensive and unwieldy government jobs program such as the later King desired, for example, could have matched the millions of new high- and low-skill jobs created by the U.S. economy over the past two decades—a market dynamism ignited by the very "production efficiency techniques" that King saw as a big problem.

King's radical proposal of a guaranteed income for all was as misguided as his call for a gigantic government jobs program. True, when he embraced the idea during the late sixties, he had some company. Both Nobel economist Milton Friedman and President Richard Nixon backed some version of a guaranteed income program. But we now know empirically from the Office of Economic Opportunity's ten-year Negative Income Tax experiment (conducted from 1968 to 1978, primarily in Denver and Seattle) that such subsidies significantly weaken the work ethic. The experiment found, too, that income guarantees correlate with family dissolution. Not surprisingly, support for the idea has dried up. If the nation had ever implemented this grand plan of King's, it would have discouraged the very behavior—finding and keeping work, and getting and staying married—that we know, and King once knew, actually does reduce poverty.

But of course, in a broader sense, the nation *did* pursue the later King's big-government approach for 35 years, with little but failure to show for it. Even as U.S. firms vigorously churned out jobs and integrated millions of low-skill immigrants into the mainstream economy, the nation spent more than $5 trillion on anti-poverty programs, only to see the condition of poor blacks worsen. If that weren't enough to discredit King's late views, the success of welfare reform should clinch the case. The experience over the last five years or so of thousands upon thousands of former welfare mothers joining the workforce and finding that they could support their families and build better lives shows that King was too pessimistic about the capacity of many in the underclass to help themselves if given enough encouragement—and a push.

King's earlier self-help strategy was the right one. Who knows what might have happened if King had stayed with it—and lived?

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Growing

childhood in photographs

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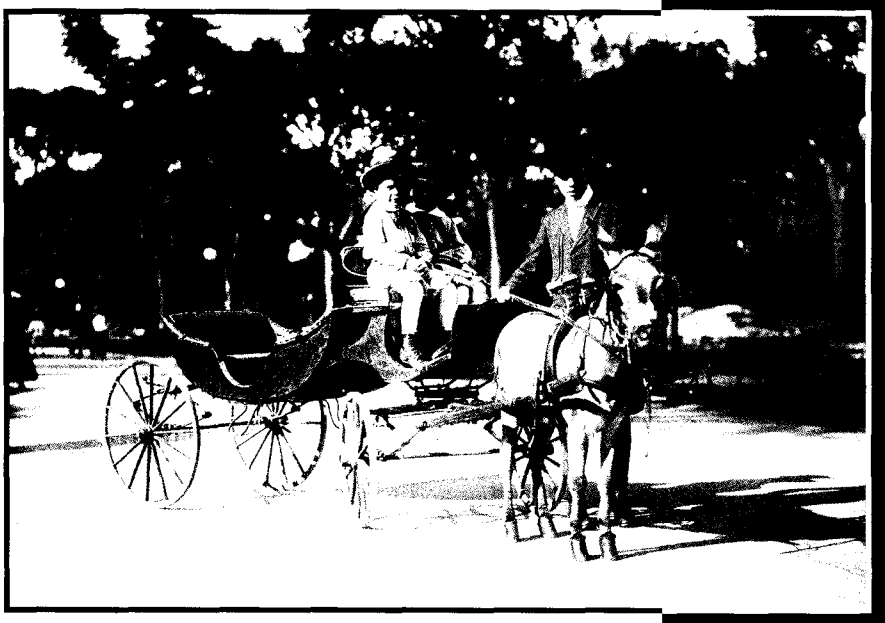

BROWN BROTHERS (3)

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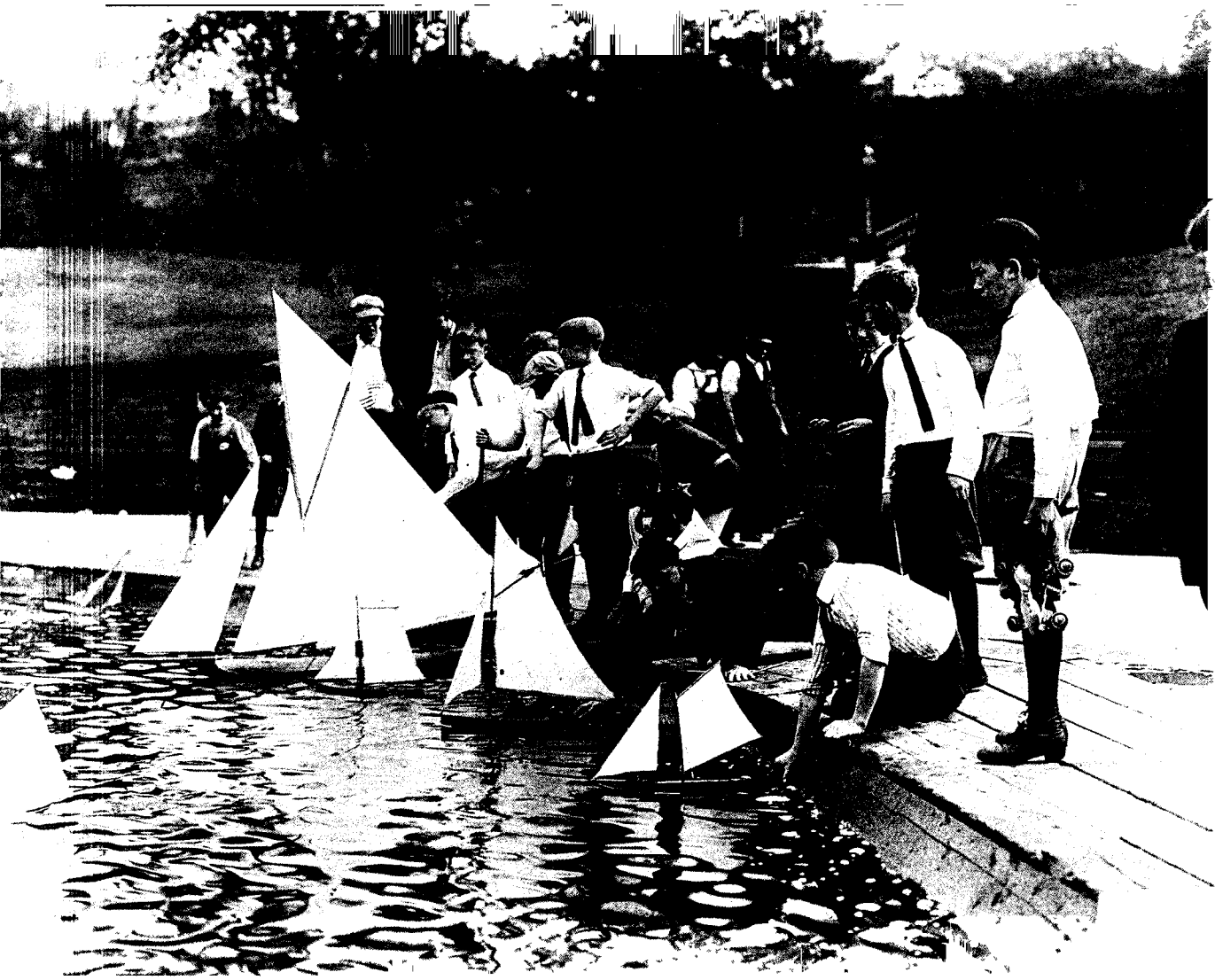

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Growing Up in Gotham

BROWN BROTHERS

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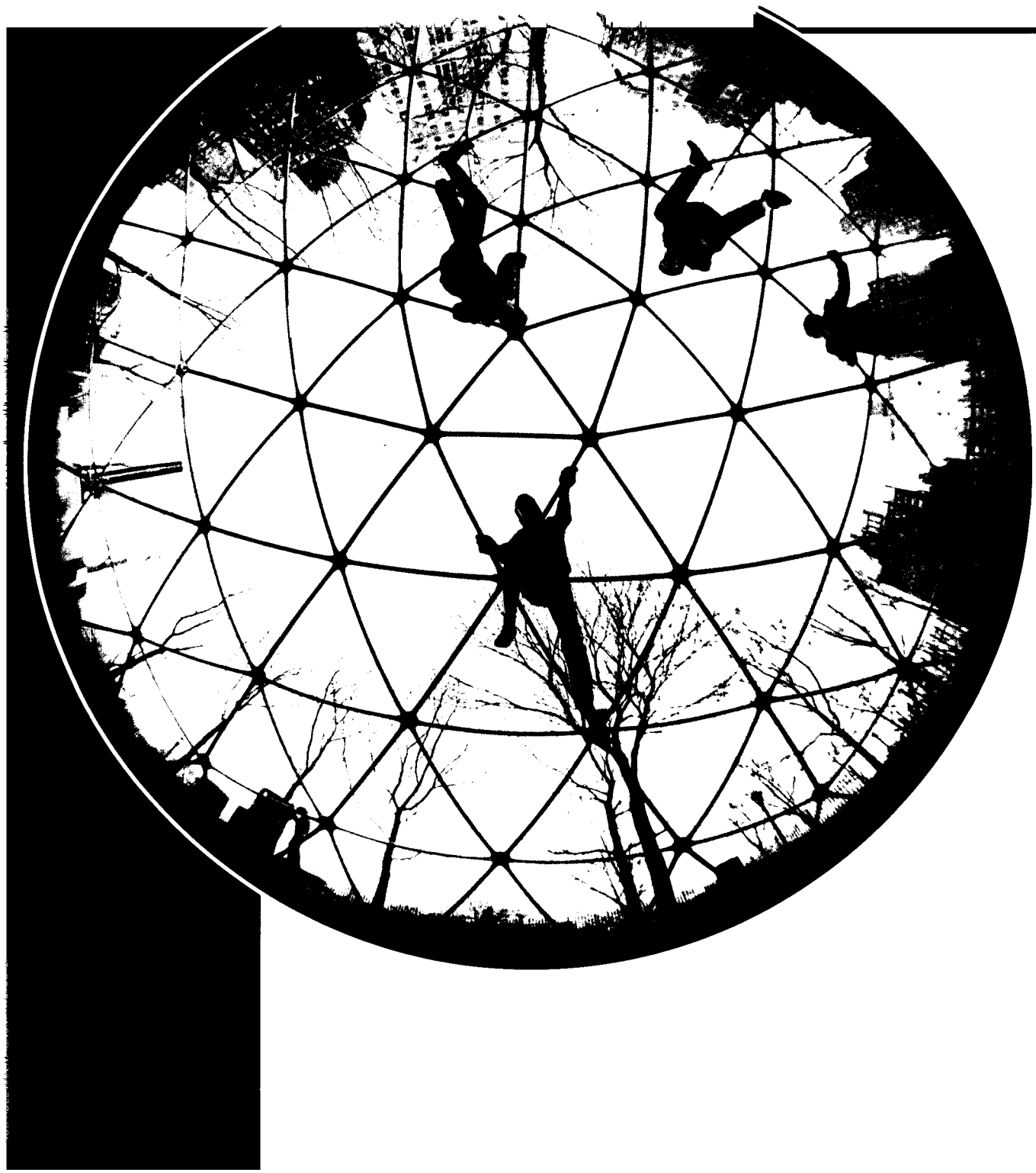

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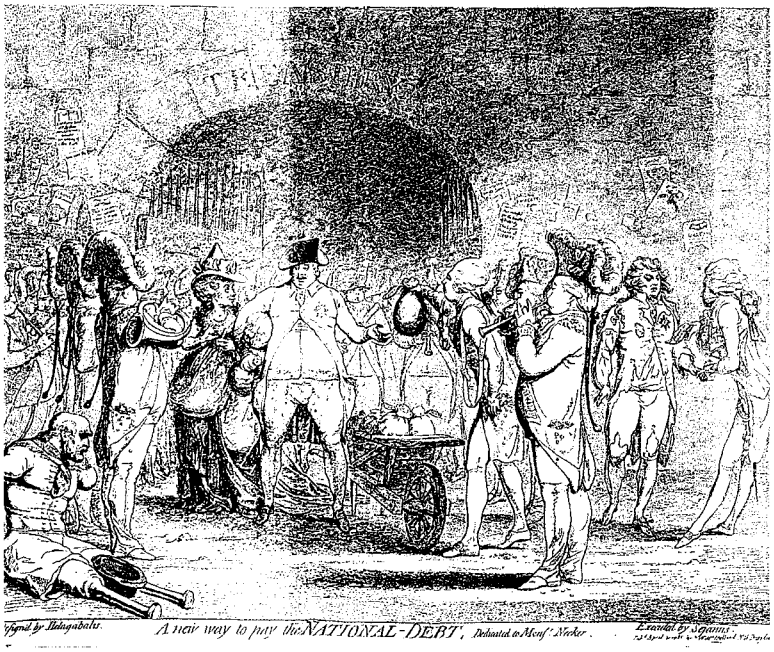
Oh, to

ngland

Gillray's Ungloomy Morality

Theodore Dalrymple



Those who admire and wish to propagate the bourgeois virtues—prudence, thrift, industry, honesty, moderation, politeness, self-restraint, and so forth—are sometimes haunted by an uncomfortable question: how would the world be if, as is not very likely, everyone were to adopt these virtues as his own? Would not the world be a duller (though of course a much better ordered) place—a kind of giant Lucerne or Vevey? It is surely not a coincidence that the iconography of hell is so much more vivid and interesting than that of heaven, a location that induces a deadly boredom even as one strains to imagine what its attractions might be. Vice is like suffering: each individual instance of it is regrettable, but what sensible person would wish to eliminate it altogether? Indeed, life without the possibility of vice, and therefore without its actual practice, would be deprived of all moral meaning. And once the world is made virtuous, will there be no more cakes and ale?

The problem of upholding virtue and denouncing vice without appearing priggish, killjoy, bigoted, and narrow-minded has become so acute that intellectuals are now inclined either to deny that there is a distinction between the two or to invert their value. There is no higher word of praise in an art critic's vocabulary, for example, than "transgressive," as if transgression were in itself good, regardless of what is being transgressed. Likewise, to break a taboo is to be a hero, irrespective of the content of the taboo. Who is more contemned than he who clings stubbornly to old moral insights?

A recent magnificent exhibition of the work of the great British caricaturist James Gillray (1756–1815) at the Tate Gallery in London demonstrates that the criticism of morals and manners was not always associated in Britain with puritanism, bigotry, and small-mindedness but on the contrary was once vigorous, joyful, and uproariously funny. Few of the spectators at the exhibition laughed, however: an art gallery being a temple of culture, the nearest thing a modern city has to a functioning cathedral, it would have been sacrilege to have smiled, let alone to have emitted a sound indicating amusement. I noticed the same strenuously poker-faced deportment at the exhibition of the work of Honoré Daumier in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris shortly before, a deportment that, in the light of the wonderfully funny material, can only be described as heroic.

As soon as you entered the Tate's rooms whose walls were covered with Gillray's astonishing output of work, you realized—however much you thought you already knew about Gillray—that he did not so much depict or satirize as create and people a world. It is the same kind of achievement as Dickens's, fecund, imaginative, and throbbing with life. Gillray's work, like that of

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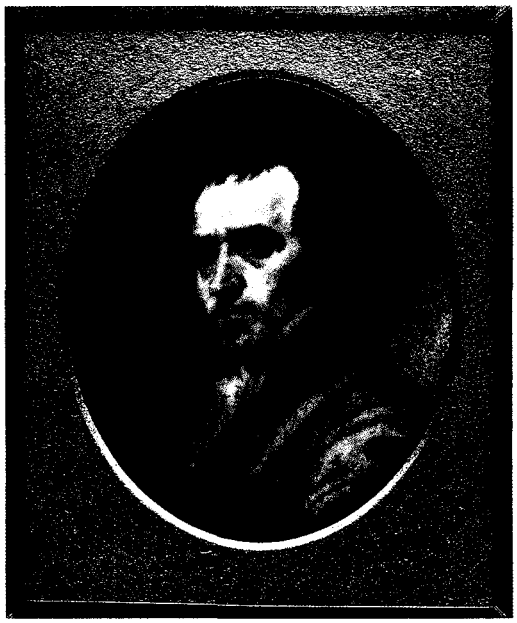
Dickens, uplifts even as it pours scorn on what it criticizes or derides. It is the expression of an uninhibited and fearless freedom of spirit such as one rarely encounters anywhere today and that is possible only in a free society that contests neither individuality nor individualism. You left the exhibition thinking not that human weakness, folly, and vice were any the less weakness, folly, and vice—on the contrary, you left with a heightened awareness of them all around you—but that life is a rich and splendid experience, if only you viewed it aright. You can have both fun and a moral standpoint: they are not mutually exclusive.

Gillray, like Swift before him and Dickens after him, saw everything through a lens that clarified even as it distorted. It highlighted and distilled the salient moral characteristics of everyone and everything upon whom and upon which he turned it, and left the inessential out. This way of seeing is a mark (not *the* mark, of course) of original genius. It became second nature to Gillray, just as it was to Dickens, who, answering the accusation that his characters were mere caricatures, wrote in the preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit* that what were caricatures to his critics were to him straightforward representations of people who were easily to be found by those with eyes to see and ears to hear: the fault was not in his writing but in his critics' restricted and unimaginative powers of perception.



Gillray by Gillray

Remarkably little is known about Gillray's life, considering that his work was so celebrated in his own lifetime. He was born in humble circumstances to a father who had lost an arm as a dragoon at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745—a fact that might explain why one of the only unequivocal expressions of pity in Gillray's generally pitiless oeuvre is for an ex-serviceman with two wooden legs and both arms amputated, who sits, unsuccessfully imploring alms, at the bottom left-hand corner of the print "A New Way to Pay the National Debt" (page 102), in which George III emerges from the Treasury with bags of gold, while being offered yet more by the prime minister, William Pitt, who has already filled his own pockets with gold.

After his enforced retirement from the army, Gillray's father became a sexton for the Moravians, a fundamentalist Christian sect of Bohemian origin. The Moravians were such puritanical naysayers that, when ill, they prayed for death rather than for recovery, to leave behind this irredeemably corrupt world for the purity of heaven. James's eldest brother, John, begged when he was grievously ill at the age of seven to have his coffin brought near him. His dying words soon afterward were, "Pray don't keep me. O let me go, I must go!" Such prayers were often answered in Georgian London: at the time of Gillray's birth, half of all children in London died before the age of five, and he himself was the only one of his parents' six children who survived into adulthood.

It is not unusual for the children of religious enthusiasts to reject the doctrines of their upbringing, though some emotional trace of them usually remains behind. In Gillray, the residue of the belief that human life on this earth is a negligible and despicable thing conflicted with an exuberant love of that life, the result being an evenhanded ridicule of the human race that combined considerable ferocity with profound affection.

For the rest, Gillray as a person remains enigmatic. He preferred the company of tradesmen in a tavern (the shopkeepers of

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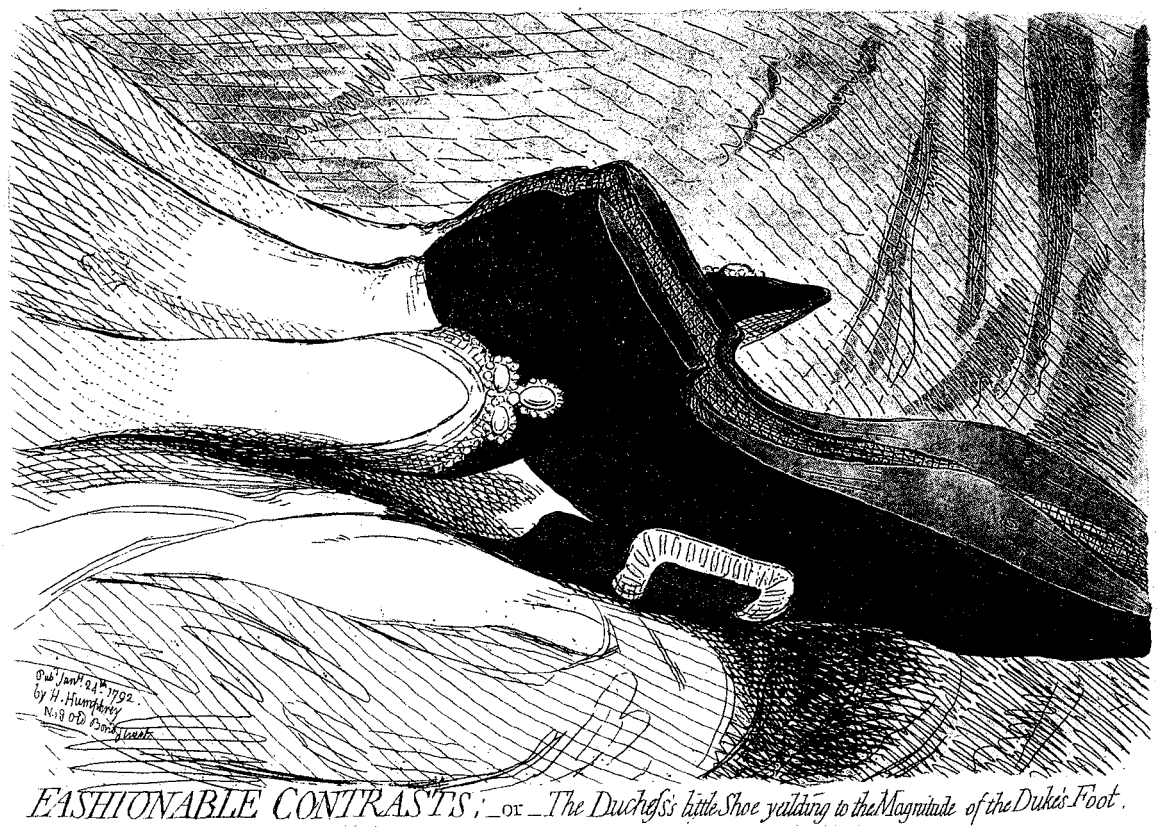

FASHIONABLE CONTRASTS; or The Duchess's little Shoe yielding to the Magnitude of the Duke's Foot.

Napoleon's contemptuous remark) to that of the *beau monde* that he became so famous for depicting, and whose members he sketched in the street and in the Houses of Parliament. It is said that those who associated with him in taverns had no idea that he was so distinguished and famous a man: his modesty was unselfconscious, and the company of the tradesmen no doubt served to preserve the earthiness of his outlook and his ability to puncture pretension wherever he found it.

No doubt also the early loss of so many siblings taught him a certain detachment: and the only self-portrait of him, a miniature in the National Portrait Gallery, is curious in its grayness—literally the predominant color of the portrait—and its blandness (page 103). The only thing it tells us about him was that he was self-effacing, without easily definable personality traits, which makes it all the more likely that the graphic world he created, unequaled in its energy and vibrancy, full of immensely fat or preternaturally thin people, where vanity, greed, naïveté, duplicity, and chicanery rule, was what was most important to him: and that the theater of the world was of more significance to him than his own internal drama.

It is likely that there was considerable internal drama, however, for Gillray is never known to have had intimate relations with anyone. For most of his adult life he lived in Mrs. Humphreys's house, above her print shop on St. James Street. She was his publisher and business partner, and though they lived amicably together, their relationship was probably not a sexual one (Mrs. Humphreys was a spinster considerably older than he). Gillray probably had a problem with sex: he inevitably portrays contact between the sexes as gross, ridiculous, or both. His scatological disgust is almost of Swiftian intensity. And when he designed

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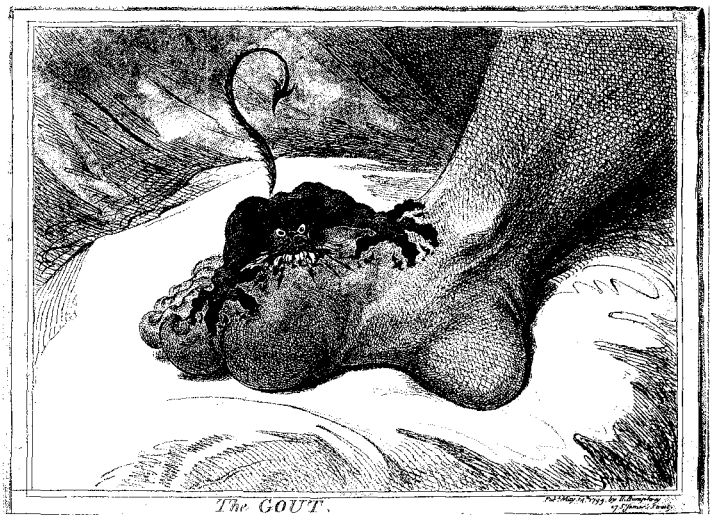
a print publicizing the excesses of the French Revolution, he lingered a little too lovingly on the whipping of the nuns by the Jacobins. Indeed, whenever he portrays whipping (as in a print depicting what would happen if the French Revolution crossed the Channel, in which Prime Minister Pitt is tied bare-chested to a post and whipped by his radical opponent Charles James Fox), one detects in the artist a more than average attraction to the subject. And when finally Gillray lost control of his inner demons, when portrayal of the external world no longer sufficed to satisfy him, he went mad. He spent his last few years being looked after by Mrs. Humphreys, believing himself to be Rubens.



Gillray's draughtsmanship was as elegant as his subject matter was inelegant (he received training at the recently established Royal Academy of Arts), and his composition was sure: he worked at such a speed that he could afford no errors. He was master both of baroque detail and of classical simplicity, crowding some of his prints with so many contemporary allusions that it took many pages for the correspondent of the Prussian monthly journal, *Paris und London*, to explain them all to the readers. (Gillray was very popular in Prussia, where his prints were often reproduced, and his uninhibited commentary on the political and social affairs of his time aroused both wonder and envy, raising the subversive question in militarized Prussia of how a society that permitted such commentary not only failed to fall apart immediately but actually flourished.) Despite the fact that his formal schooling lasted only a few years at most, Gillray frequently used quotations from Milton and Shakespeare, quotations that the Prussian commentator claimed that "every Englishman knows," thus implying the existence of a culture that was both widely diffused and of high quality. And certainly, Gillray imbued whatever he drew with a sophisticated and subtle outlook on life such as a deep acquaintance with literature is likely to confer.

For example, one of his most famous (and simplest) prints, a masterpiece of emblematic distillation, was called "Fashionable Contrasts, or the Duchess's little shoe yielding to the Magnitude of the Duke's Foot" (opposite). Two delicate little female feet in dainty, jewel-encrusted leather slippers pointing sideways are separated by two enormous male feet in buckled shoes, face downward on the bed. The sexual act has never been more suggestively portrayed (and Gillray's disgust is made evident by the physical inequality of the couple, suggesting violation rather than consent).

This elegantly drawn print is a devastating satire on the obsequious public commentary that followed the marriage of George III's second son, the Duke of York, to Frederica, a short and plain Prussian princess. In the attempt to find something flattering to say about her, the press widely remarked upon the smallness and delicacy of her feet and the beauty of her footwear. A writer in the *Morning Post* wrote that a foreigner might suppose from this commentary that most British newspapers were "conducted by shoe-makers . . . so much have they said about the Duchess of York's slipper."

It was Gillray's print that put paid once and for all to this ridiculous and fulsome praise. Gillray was implicitly arguing against flattery and in favor of sincerity, without embracing the

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brutal and dehumanizing notion that every truth must be told. Showing a certain delicacy of feeling, he did not intend his print to wound the princess—whose plainness and public prominence were neither her own fault nor her own desire—but rather the lickspittles who had made themselves ridiculous in praising her. No one could have done a better job of criticizing the flatterers without insulting the flattered.

Gillray appealed, of course, to public opinion and was a pioneer in doing so: for he knew that his exposure of abuses and follies (and not merely political ones) would help, if not to end, then to limit them. Public criticism was thus essential to public progress, and Gillray knew its power. He had, for example, more or less single-handedly ruined the career of Benjamin Perkins, an American quack who had settled in London, by publishing a hilarious print of Perkins applying his "metallic tractors" to the rubicund nose of an obvious tippler. On the table next to the credulous patient (thoroughly "electrified" by the metal prongs that Perkins points at him) is a newspaper with an advertisement for the Perkinsian method: "a certain Cure for all Disorders, Red Noses, Gouty Toes, Windy Bowels, Broken Legs, Hump Backs." There is no better preserver of common sense than ridicule, and no one who had once seen Gillray's print could continue to credit Perkins's false promises of a panacea. Like all the other caricaturists of the age, Gillray exhibited a great interest in medicine, and his print of the gout—the Georgian disease par excellence—as a little blue devil sinking its sharp fangs into the inflamed joint of the sufferer's big toe is the sharpest pictorial representation of a disease ever drawn (page 105).

But it is for his political caricature that Gillray is most remembered, and it is doubtful whether he has ever been surpassed in

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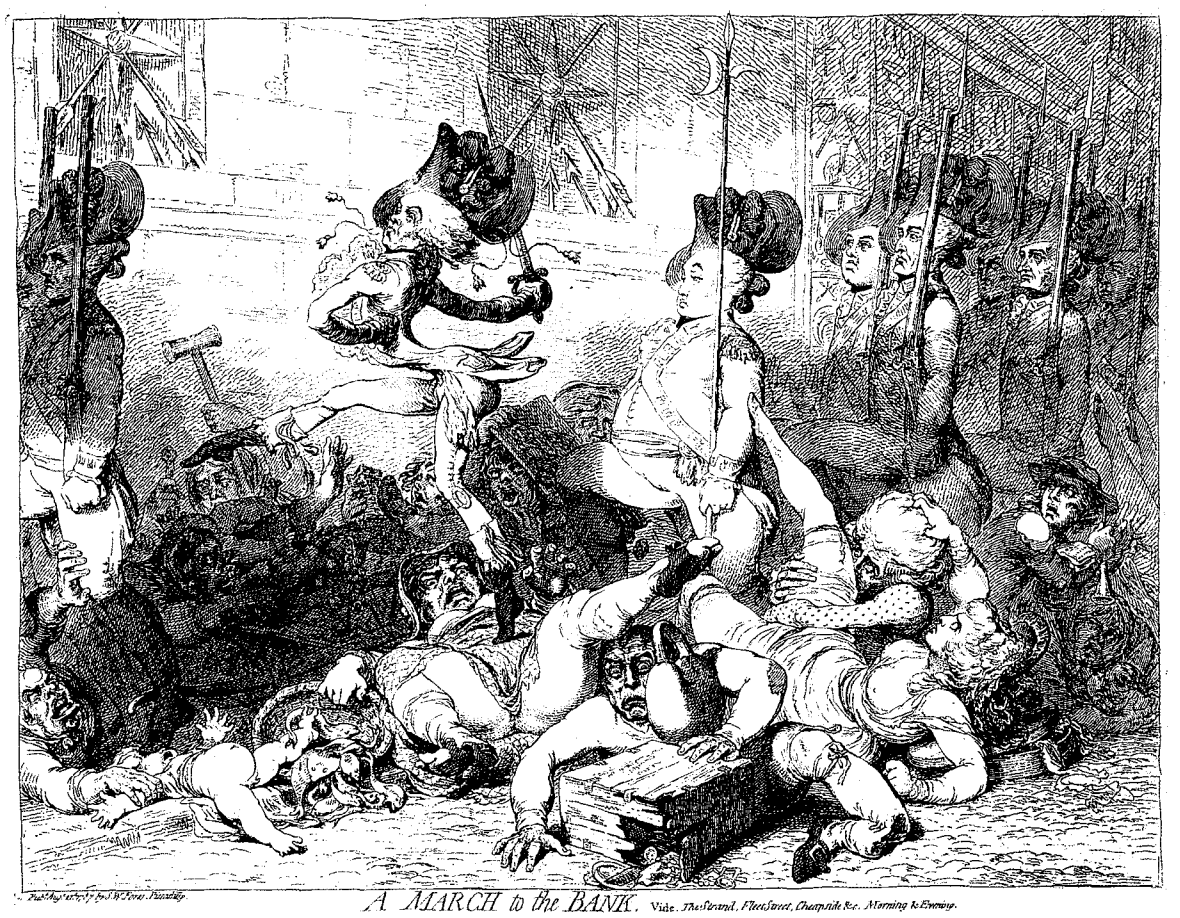

A MARCH to the BANK. Vide. The Strand, Fleet Street, Change Alley &c. Morning & Evening.

this field, of which he was one of the first practitioners. George Orwell once said that he wanted to turn political writing into an art: Gillray had done that for political caricature a century and a half earlier.

Gillray's sincerity and integrity have sometimes been questioned, since for a number of years he took a grant from the government, and he also remarked that he had gone over to the government side because the opposition had no money to pay him or to buy his prints. At a distance of two centuries, however, it would not be altogether easy for the uninformed to distinguish the politicians whom he supported from those whom he attacked, and certainly his caricatures of the prime minister, his sometime paymaster, were never flattering: Pitt always appeared in the prints as gangling, awkward, cold, not altogether honest, and perpetually taken by surprise. Only Napoleon, whom Gillray depicts as Little Boney, a grandiose Lilliputian, appears more physically ridiculous.

Gillray's political evolution was determined not so much by his personal financial interest as by the stupendous events of the era in which he lived: the French Revolution, the birth of ideological politics, the expansion of democracy, and the dawn of romanticism. He began as a moderate admirer of the French Revolution but soon turned against it (well before he accepted government money) because of its evident excesses. As the struggle first with revolutionary and then with Napoleonic France grew

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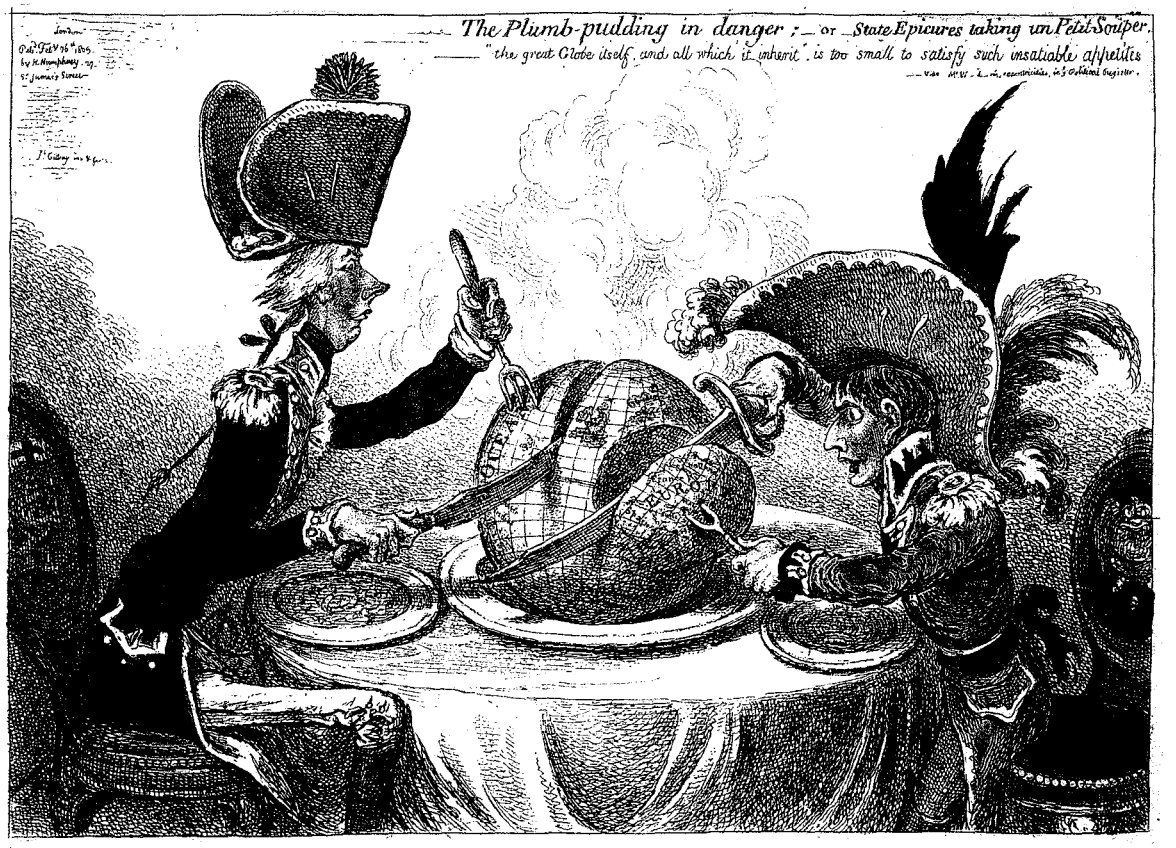
The Plumb-pudding in danger;— or —State Epicures taking un Petit Souper.
"the great Globe itself, and all which it inherit" is too small to satisfy such insatiable appetites

ever more desperate, ever more like total war, so his attitude to George III relented. Originally depicting the king as contemptibly hypocritical and miserly—in refusing, for example, to put sugar in his tea, ostensibly out of sympathy for the poor slaves on the West Indian plantations but really for reasons of economy, to save a trifling sum of money (page 106)—Gillray became more indulgent, seeing him as the symbol of British national resistance to the universalizing pretensions of Napoleonic France. Gillray was a patriot, who defended as vigorously as any pen has ever done the freedom of his country without ever losing sight of the defects of its inhabitants.

In remaining staunchly patriotic while retaining a clear-eyed and humorously critical view of his own society, Gillray performed a feat that was to prove beyond the majority of intellectuals during a later titanic struggle, the cold war. Gillray never lost sight of the greater and lesser evils: though the Britain of his day was corrupt, ridden with snobbery and other vices that he had no hesitation in exposing and lampooning, he did not conclude that there was nothing to choose between it and French revolutionary excess or Napoleonic domination of the world. The choice for Gillray, as for all persons of good sense, was never between perfection and hell on earth, but always between better and worse. He chose the better without believing it was the best possible, and he would never have believed that the time would come when the services of critics such as himself were redundant.

What were the values Gillray cherished? Despite the almost hallucinatory, chaotic pullulation of so many of his prints, he believed in a constitutional order

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O Sacre Dieu! vat they sing be de Liberté
Vive le Assemble Nationale, no more Slavery! — all Free Citizen, one
by Gar, how we live! — we even wid de Milk Maid
Oh! this curs'd Ministry! they'll ruin
us with their damnd. Taxes!
why, Zounds! they're making Slaves of
us all, & Starving us to Death!
FRENCH LIBERTY.
BRITISH SLAVERY.

that reduces, if it does not eliminate entirely, the exercise of arbitrary power, and that rests upon equality before the law. In "A March to the Bank," he mocks the arrogance of those who believe themselves to be unaccountable, and who therefore think they have the right to trample roughshod (in this case, quite literally) over the lesser fry by whom they are surrounded (page 107). Here we see a brigade of the militia that marched every day to guard the Bank of England after the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780, led by a self-important and preposterous popinjay officer goose-stepping with narcissistic satisfaction over the sprawled bodies of the common people in the street, convinced of his own warrant to behave as he likes. Gillray so lovingly renders the popinjay, and we laugh so deeply at his pretensions, that the savagery of the social criticism, though devastating, is somewhat mitigated. In making such arrogance ridiculous as well as bad, Gillray helps to keep the guillotine at bay. His criticism, while fierce, is good-humored and measured.

For Gillray, the essential difference between the Britain of his day and post-revolutionary and Napoleonic France was that between a nation of self-directed free men, pursuing their own interests under a law that permitted what it did not forbid, and a nation of servitors, living under a law that forbade what it did not require. Among the freedoms that Gillray extolled was that of commerce, the freedom of Napoleon's despised shopkeepers, whom Gillray knew well and counted as his friends. It is therefore no coincidence that his archetypal common Englishman, John Bull, is fat and robustly prosperous, more inclined to labor under "the horror of digestion" (to quote the title of one of Gillray's unflattering depictions

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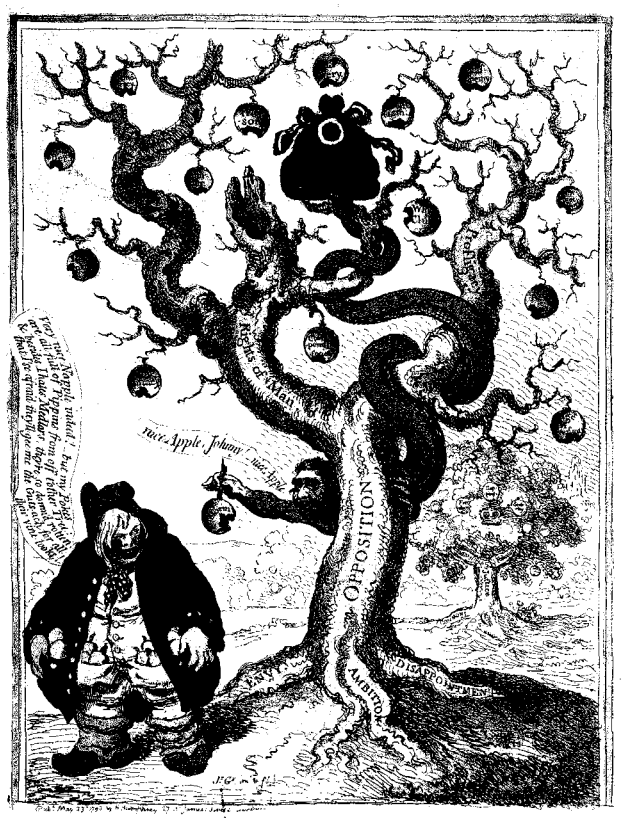
of the disreputable prince regent, later George IV) than under the rigors of starvation, unlike his French counterpart, who, lacking John Bull's commercial freedom, is always thin, ragged, and sickly.

But Gillray is not insensible to the ironies of human existence, and if he is patriotically attached to the values that he believes make his country the superior of its enemies, he is certainly no xenophobe. Very occasionally, indeed, he gives in to the temptations of moral equivalence: for example, in one of the most famous political cartoons ever published, "The Plumb-Pudding in Danger—or State Epicures Taking *un petit souper*," he shows Prime Minister Pitt sitting at a table with Napoleon, carving a world in the form of a plum pudding into slices with their swords, Pitt taking the ocean, and Napoleon Europe, without the faintest indication of any moral difference between them.

Even when he contrasts the fortunate state of John Bull with that of the French commoner, Gillray introduces a note of irony. John Bull is never an attractive figure for Gillray. In one print, entitled "French Liberty, British Slavery," for example, he shows a bald John Bull so fat that he bursts at the seams—the very epitome of today's British football hooligan—preparing to overeat from a huge roast beef, declaiming: "Ah! this cursed Ministry! They'll ruin us, with their damn'd Taxes—why, Zounds! They're making Slaves of us all, & Starving us to Death!" Opposite him is his French counterpart, thin and in rags, sitting on a stool before a wretched fire in a dilapidated room, gnawing hungrily on scallions, saying: "O! Sacre Dieu! Vat blessing be de Liberté. Vive le Assemble!—no more Tax! No more Slavery!—all Free Citizen!—ha! hah!—by Gar, how ve live! Ve svim in de Milk and Honey!" (page 109).



The Tree of Liberty, with the Devil tempting John Bull

In the absurd satisfaction of the Frenchman with his wretched lot, Gillray points to a new and powerful source of human self-delusion that was not to reach its apogee until more than a century later and that is still with us: political ideology. Political abstractions, he realized, can disguise or change the meaning of the most elementary realities. Meanwhile, John Bull indulges in the natural human propensity to grumble and not to count blessings, a propensity that is far from harmless during a confrontation with a ruthless ideological enemy.

Gillray's relations with the greatest political philosopher of the age, Edmund Burke, were also of an ironical nature. As a cultured man and avid reader, Gillray had likely read Burke and absorbed the lessons of his philosophy. Indeed, "The Tree of Liberty—with the Devil tempting John Bull" could be seen as a succinct graphic illustration of that philosophy (above). Of two trees, the one in the background, called Justice, has abundant green foliage; its two main branches, labeled Laws and Religion, bear healthy fruit called Happiness, Freedom, and Security. The tree in the foreground, called Opposition,

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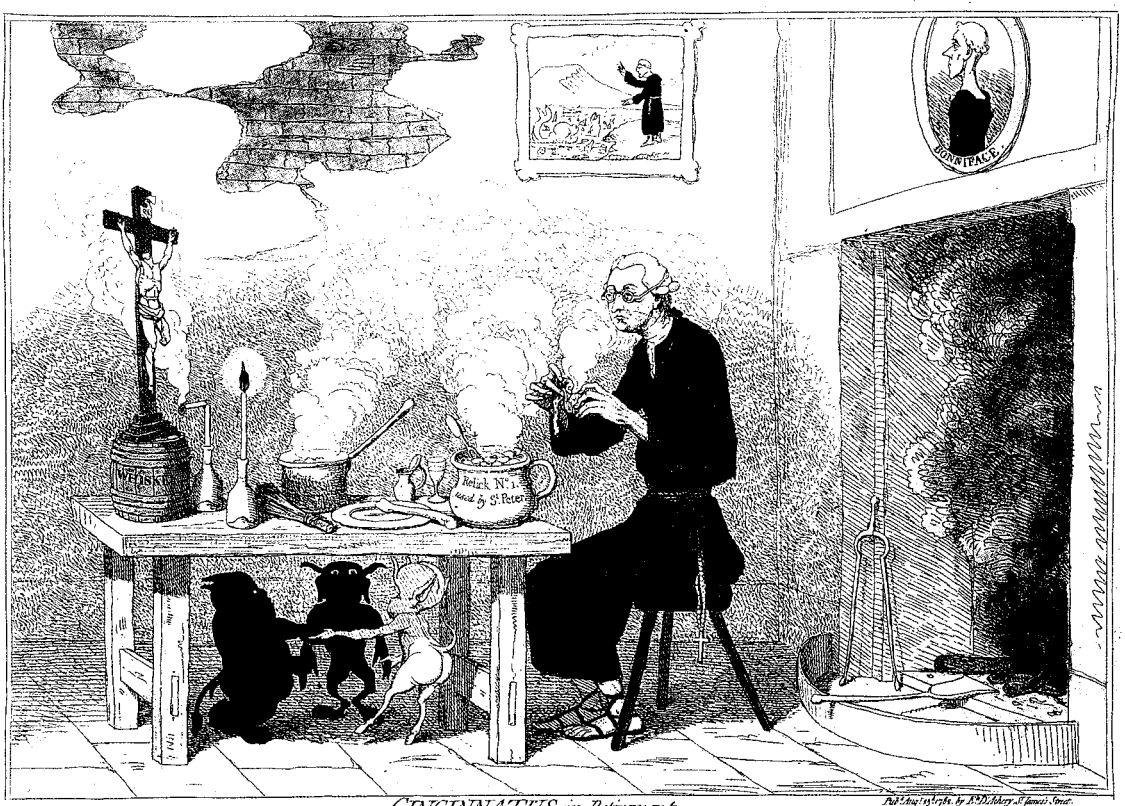

CINCINNATUS in Retirement.
falsely supposed to represent Jesuit-Pad driven back to his native Potatoes. see Romish Common-Wealth.

is dead and without foliage, as if blasted by lightning; its two main branches are Rights of Man and Profligacy. From its lesser branches hang rotten, reddish-golden apples, each with a bite taken out of it, labeled with such temptations as Democracy, Conspiracy, and Revolution. Down the tree slithers a green snake ending in the jowly head, with its Nixonian stubble, of the radical Whig leader, Charles James Fox, holding out to the figure of John Bull an apple labeled Reform. "Nice apple, Johnny—nice apple!" says Fox. But the real meaning of the temptation is evident from the red revolutionary bonnet of liberty, from which the Fox-serpent's tail emerges, and from the difference in the roots of the two trees: those of the Tree of Justice being the Commons, King, and Lords of the established British constitution, those of the Tree of Opposition being Envy, Ambition, and Disappointment, the discreditable emotions that are, by implication, the true motives behind French revolutionary radicalism, rather than supposed love of the beautiful abstractions with which the rotten fruit of the Tree of Opposition is marked.

John Bull is a fat and slow-witted country bumpkin, with a certain shrewdness nonetheless: he is wise enough to resist the siren song of beautiful abstractions. "Very nice N'apple indeeed!" he replies to Fox, in the kind of rural dialect that is still to be heard in Norfolk and Gloucestershire. "But my Pokes [pockets] are all full of Pippins from off t'other Tree: and besides, I hates Medlars, they're so damn'd rotten that I'se afraid they'll gee me Guts-ach for all their vine looks!" The flashy intellectual brilliance of Fox is no match for the wisdom of ages, the common sense of the free-born Englishman. I was reminded of an encounter I had

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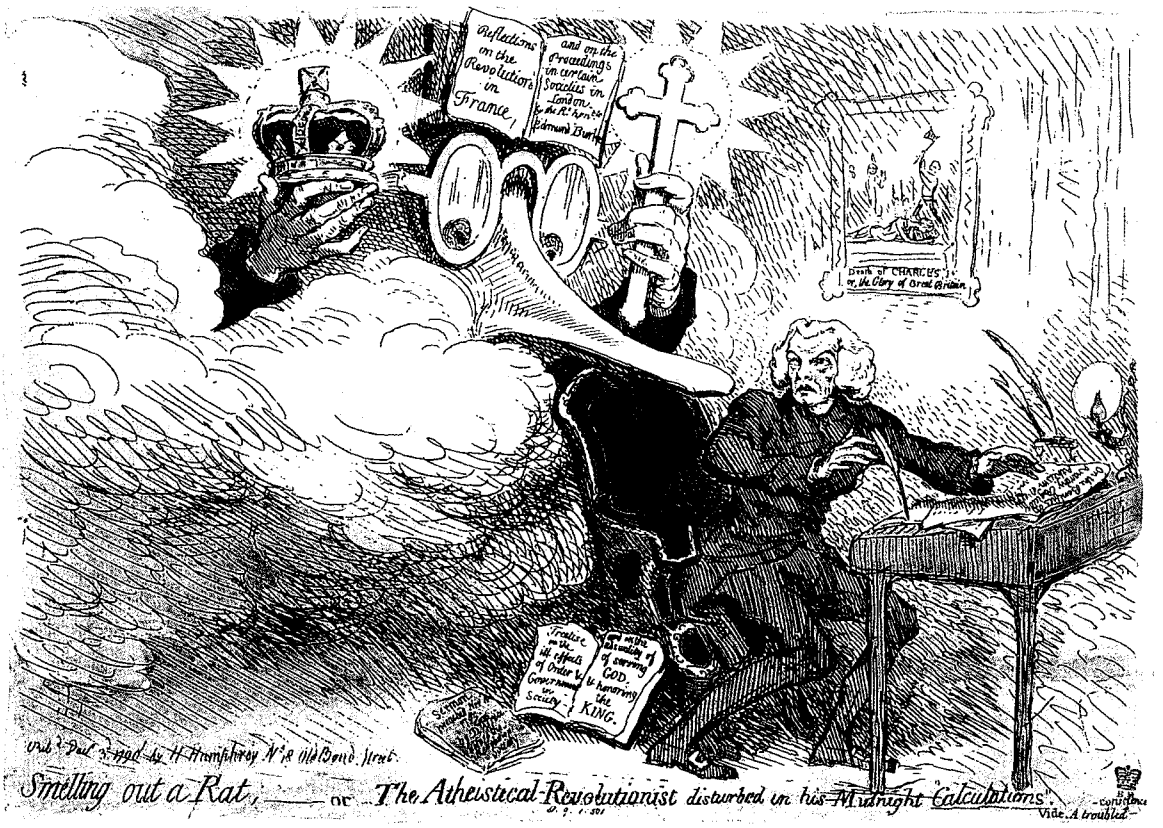
Reflections on the Revolution in France
and on the Proceedings in certain Societies in London relative to that Event
by the Rt. Hon.ble Edmund Burke
Death of CHARLES I. or, the Glory of Great Britain
Treatise on the Nature & Effects of Order in Government & Society
An Address to the Throughout of Britain on the Blessing of serving GOD & honouring the KING
Smelling out a Rat, — or The Atheistical-Revolutionist disturbed in his Midnight Calculations
Vide. A troubled

with a Salvadoran peasant during the guerrilla insurgency there in the 1980s. He acknowledged that, man for man, the insurgents were probably better people than their opponents on the government side: but still he did not want them to win, for he saw in their abstractions not promises, but threats. His house and farm might have been poor things, but they were his own.

No message could be more Burkean than that in Gillray's "The Tree of Liberty": yet Edmund Burke, like John Bull, never appears in Gillray in a flattering light. On the contrary, Gillray portrayed him a lean and hungry Jesuit (or jesuitical) dissembler, a dangerous man with a hidden agenda—actuated by malice, for example, when attacking Warren Hastings, the governor-general of British India, whom he attempted for seven years to impeach for corruption. Burke appears in one print absurdly caparisoned in a suit of armor and wearing a biretta, brandishing a ridiculous blunderbuss, ambushing Warren Hastings on an elephant. In another, Burke is seen—while he was still a Whig—as a rank political incompetent, driving the coach and horses of the opposition party arrogantly through the Slough of Despond of unelectability. After his resignation from the government in 1782, he is portrayed ironically as "Cincinnatus in Retirement" (the dictator who retired to rural life after saving Rome), dressed in a Jesuit's robe and sitting down to a chamber pot full of potatoes, one of which he lugubriously peels, in an Irish hovel (page 111).

In yet another print, he grovels avariciously for a pittance at the feet of Prime Minister Pitt as the latter grinds John Bull through a mincing machine to produce gold coins. Most famously, he appears simply as a sharp, elongated nose, a pair of spectacles, and a pair of hands holding aloft the British crown and a priest's crucifix, all emerging as an appari-

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tion from a cloud, to frighten Dr. Richard Price, a radical dissenting clergyman who preached in approval of the French Revolution and sent a congratulatory message to the National Assembly. The title of this print—"Smelling out a Rat—or—The Atheistical-Revolutionist disturbed in his Midnight Calculations"—suggests that the anti-ideological Burke has himself become an ideologue and is in danger of becoming a Grand Inquisitor (opposite).

A VOLUPTUARY under the horrors of Digestion.

Burke, brilliant but humorless, was one of the very few of Gillray's celebrated targets who did not laugh at himself. Even Benjamin Perkins is said to have laughed at the print that destroyed his reputation as a healer. One of the most truly admirable qualities of the society from which Gillray emerged, and which he depicted with such verve, was its ability to laugh at itself. Even the king, a man who took himself sufficiently seriously, laughed heartily at Gillray's lampoons of him; the prince regent, whom Gillray never depicts as other than the fat, unscrupulous voluptuary that he was (above), bought Gillray prints by the dozen and was one of Mrs. Humphreys's best customers. Rising politicians wanted to be caricatured by Gillray, though he was certain to cast them in an unflattering light and expose them to ridicule: for to be caricatured by him was a public certificate of importance. George Canning, later foreign secretary and briefly prime minister, went to considerable trouble to get himself into a Gillray print and was very pleased when he made his first appearance in one, albeit as one of the politicians hanged in the "Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion—or—Forcible Reasons for Negotiating a Regicide Peace."

Gillray's contemporaries—not only in Britain—recognized him as a great artist. That recognition faded even before his death, and the exhibition at the Tate has now restored it. But Gillray's greatness was more than artistic: he proved by example that public opinion could be mobilized for the betterment of society, and that social criticism could be fierce and uncompromising yet good-natured, measured, and loyal. He proved that the popular could be subtle, learned, and philosophically intelligent. He proved what many have doubted: that having a moral standpoint does not entail solemnity and joylessness.

In a Blairite age, one feels like exclaiming:

Gillray, thou shouldst be living at this hour.

England hath need of thee.

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A Battery That Keeps Going and Going . . .

To the editor:

Steven Malanga's "How to Rebuild New York" [Autumn 2001] cautions against the use of public authorities like the Port Authority or Queens West (barely mentioning the Battery Park City Authority) and states emphatically that "no government agency or authority, new or existing, should . . . be put in charge of planning or executing the [rebuilding] project." A long, hard look across the street from Ground Zero might change his mind.

Several factors have made Battery Park City [BPC] one of the most successful public-sector initiatives of its day. In the late 1960s, New York State had the planning vision and political will to revitalize lower Manhattan by replacing rotting piers along the Hudson, from Battery Park north to Chambers Street, with a planned community built on landfill. In 1968, largely due to the efforts of Governor Rockefeller and his brother David, head of Chase bank and the Downtown Alliance, the state created the Battery Park City Authority [BPCA], a public-benefit corporation, to replace the piers with 92 acres of landfill; master-plan the development; build out civic facilities, roads, and infrastructure; develop the project area's real estate; and manage its public park system.

In 1972, BPCA issued $200 million in bonds, with New York State paying the debt service. After the fiscal crisis of the seventies, development surged with the building of the World Financial Center. In 1986, BPCA issued more bonds, the proceeds from which repaid the state in full, with interest. BPCA had achieved fiscal independence, generating enough money to pay for its own operations and debt service, without any state or city appropriations.

The return on this public-sector investment has been substantial. Since repaying the state, BCPA has generated additional excess revenues (after operating costs and debt service), to the tune of $585 million for the city and $10 million for the state. Over the years, BPCA has issued bonds to fund other civic needs, including $143 million for housing and $150 million for the city budget.

Revenues generated by BPC are collected by and funneled through BCPA without any other claims or encumbrances. This allows for continuity, stability, and reliability, without the uncertainty of state or city budget constraints.

BPCA has also built one of the world's greatest park systems, enjoyed by thousands of city residents and tourists from around the world. Our 30 acres of parks are home to numerous pieces of artwork as well as public-service programs that provide education and entertainment. BPCA also subsidizes museums, cultural programs, public schools, and libraries.

BPCA runs with an entrepreneurial mentality without losing sight of its public purpose.

Robert M. Serpico
President
Battery Park City Parks Conservancy

Steven Malanga responds:

Only by the mediocre standards used to measure public development in New York State—where authorities like Queens West spend years not building anything—can BCPA be considered a success. Otherwise, the authority exhibits many of the same problems described in my article and in Brian C. Anderson's "The Twin Towers Project: A Cautionary Tale." The authority has perpetuated itself long past the point where it was necessary, and in the process captured for itself hundreds of millions of dollars in revenues that should have gone directly to New York City.

The state created BPCA in 1968 to finance and build the infrastructure needed to transform rotting piers into a residential and commercial community. Like many government projects, the authority's first plan—to build low- and middle-income housing on the site—proved financially unfeasible and had to be abandoned in 1979. The authority then shifted gears and—buoyed by the heavy use of government incentives—attracted developers in the early eighties to a new plan that featured commercial development and luxury housing.

At that point, the authority had a choice: it could have sold the land to developers, used the proceeds to pay off its debt from building the infrastructure, and turned over the future of the site's development to the market and the tax revenues generated by that development to the city.

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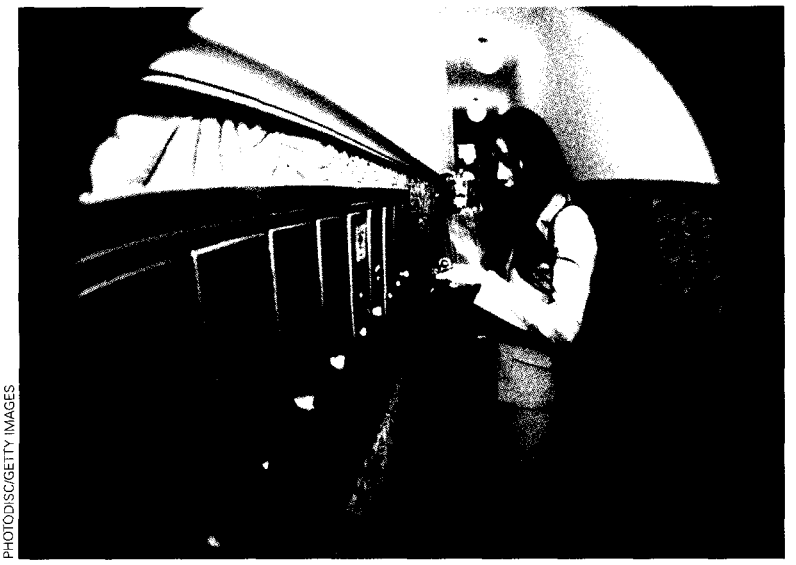

PHOTODISC/GETTY IMAGES

Instead, the authority decided to perpetuate itself. It leased the land to developers and set up payments from itself to New York City in lieu of property taxes. Those payments, the "excess revenues" to which Mr. Serpico refers, have been far below what the city would collect if the private sector owned the land. At their current values, BPC properties would have paid about $1.2 billion in city property taxes in the 1990s if they were on the tax rolls. Instead, the city received only about $350 million; the authority kept about $700 million in lease revenue for its own uses.

By setting aside so much money for itself, BPCA can spend extravagantly on amenities and on rewarding political allies. It lays out about $143,000 per acre on parkland and public spaces, compared with less than $6,000 per acre for city parks in general, according to a City Project study. As for playing political favorites, in 1990, the authority used its revenues to back a bond offering that raised $150 million to close a Dinkins administration budget gap, a one-shot infusion not available to other mayors.

BCPA shows how state-sponsored entities don't let go once they embark on development. If New York continues along this path of state capitalism, as it seems to be doing in Queens West and, more ominously, in lower Manhattan, then Gotham will soon be dotted with special enclaves with quasi-governments unaccountable to voters and revenue streams outside the purview of municipal government.

A Clockwork Equal

To the editor:

I agree with some of the conclusions in John Kekes's "Dangerous Egalitarian Dreams" [Autumn 2001]. The idiotic ramblings of Rawls and Dworkin are misconceived for two reasons. The first, as Kekes points out, is that they don't apply to human beings. There never was, and never will be, an egalitarian society. Among large groups of people, there will always be an elite, as in the supposedly egalitarian Soviet Union. Social stratification is part of human nature (or our evolutionary inheritance, if you prefer).

The second reason is that egalitarian systems provide no incentive to work. There will be little innovation; everyone will be equally and increasingly poor. Rawls and Dworkin fall into the simplistic error that views the economy as a large pie: if some get more, others get less. But market economies are expandable pies. Rich and poor both can get richer, just at different rates.

That said, Kekes's moral argument against Rawls and Dworkin falls short. Yes, we should reward the single mother who betters herself, but we cannot neglect the mugger: as a human being, he deserves compassion—no matter how deplorable his actions.

Help may come in the near future. I've seen remarkable advances since going to medical school in the sixties. Progress in psychology and neurobiology will likely provide astounding, almost frightening, therapies to control inappropriate, aggressive behavior and the dependence on drugs that is its usual cause. Such treatments will deservedly engender the same anxiety and controversy as does gene therapy, but well managed, they will be a great boon.

Jeffrey D. Postman
New York, NY

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To the editor:

I was quite astonished to read in John Kekes's penultimate paragraph, "Welfare programs eat up roughly 60 percent of the federal and state budget."

I don't have state figures handy, but Medicaid and other means-tested entitlements together made up a mere 13 percent of the federal budget for FY 2001. Adding Social Security and Medicare would still only bring the total to 48 percent of the federal budget—and characterizing those as "welfare programs" seems disingenuous at best, particularly in light of the substance of Kekes's article (especially for Social Security, in which one's eligibility is tied directly to one's lifetime contributions). I find it completely implausible that state spending could make up the gap between the 13 percent of the federal budget and the claimed 60 percent.

While by no means an egalitarian in Kekes's sense of the term, I do believe that there is an obligation to provide assistance to the needy. In my Jewish tradition, such assistance is known as *tzedakah*; while commonly translated as "charity," the Hebrew word is derived from the same root as *tzedek*, "justice." Since all material success is ultimately derived from God, justice demands that those who succeed share their wealth with those who don't. A secularized version of this idea might be to acknowledge that, though failure is sometimes earned outright, success always depends in some measure upon chance, and that those favored by chance should share with the less fortunate. This vision of justice does not insist upon leveling, but does suggest that one should feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the homeless without presuming to ask whether they are deserving.

A traditional Jewish obligation is to give one-tenth of one's income to this end. The sum of your after-tax income plus the portion of your taxes that benefit the unfortunate would be the base figure on which to calculate your 10 percent obligation. Thus, if you earned $100, and $5 of your $30 tax bill went to alleviating poverty, then your base income would be $75, and your gross charitable obligation $7.50. Your net charitable obligation in addition to paying your taxes would be $2.50.

Thus, the question of what percentage of one's taxes goes to alleviating poverty is a rather crucial one. I don't know how much of the federal budget is legitimately classified as *tzedakah*, but I am confident it is nowhere near 60 percent.

George S. Schneiderman
Harvard University

To the editor:

I couldn't disagree more with your analysis of John Rawls. His world would make me much, much happier.

I would like to be a major league baseball player and Lucy Lawless's boyfriend. In this unequal and therefore unjust world, I am neither. I'm 52 and have basically no athletic ability at all. I'm only moderately well-off, and not terribly attractive—in this unfair world, Ms. Lawless wouldn't give me the time of day.

I want a Rawlsian world that would require the Detroit Tigers to start me in left field and Lucy Lawless to go out with me.

Thank goodness Rawls understands that my choices about my education, career, and behavior, and my unchosen talents and limitations should have no effect on my income. Your carping about moral responsibility, essential and irreducible inequalities among individuals, and the inescapable vagaries of life is confusing and infuriating.

Alex Bensky
Detroit, MI

John Kekes responds:

My thanks to the many people who responded to my "Dangerous Egalitarian Dreams" with questions, criticism, and approbation.

Mr. Postman agrees with my conclusions, but thinks that criminals deserve not condemnation, but compassion and, ultimately, treatment. But if people are prevented by medical manipulation from making certain choices, they are deprived of their freedom. With freedom comes responsibility. Criminals are responsible for making the wrong choices, and that is why they should be blamed and punished. The denial of freedom and responsibility brings us closer to a world in which some authority, medical or political, makes our choices for us because we cannot be trusted to do so ourselves. It is not a world in which a reasonable person would wish to live.

Mr. Bensky's inspired lines suggest that lighthearted ridicule may better illustrate the absurdi-

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ties of egalitarianism than my more serious attempt. It is not easy to remain lighthearted, however, when egalitarian policies are advanced with a moralistic fervor that views opposition as immoral and shameful.

Mr. Schneiderman finds my claim that welfare programs take up 60 percent of the budget "disingenuous at best." The *Desk Reference on the Federal Budget* says: "About 62 percent of the budget . . . was allocated to social spending in 1996. Among the programs funded are Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, various health programs, education and training, social services, veterans' programs, unemployment insurance, and welfare." The *Unabridged Random House Dictionary* defines welfare as "financial or other assistance to an individual or a family from a city, state, or national government." I stand by my claim.

Schneiderman's felt obligation to provide assistance to the needy is laudable. I agree that people should be free to dispose of their money in any legal way they choose. What I object to is the government forcing them to dispose of it in a particular way. It is a fine thing to help people if misfortune makes them needy. But if they are needy as a consequence of their criminal, irrational, or imprudent behavior, then it is not a fine thing.

Family Pollittics

To the editor:

I was quite moved—haunted even—by Sol Stern's brief and deftly written "Showing the Flag" [Autumn 2001]. I, too, worked with David Horowitz on *Ramparts* in 1972, taking my distance from the magazine and its politics rather earlier than Horowitz did.

My main reaction to your piece on Katha Pollitt and her daughter was a deeper version of the chagrin I feel whenever I see anyone subordinating personal relationships to political ideas. I think I'll never forget the image of a mother depriving her child of love and emotional safety in the aftermath of such a horrific event—a kind of *Pietà* set on its head. *David Landau*
Via e-mail

The Real Ivory Tower?

To the editor:

Amen to Kay S. Hymowitz and Harry Stein's eloquent denunciation of moral obtuseness on campus ["Earth to Ivory Tower: Get Real!" Autumn 2001]. But I'm less enthusiastic about your research and presentation: instead of acknowledging in passing that other voices in the academy view terrorism as evil, you should make that the main point of your article. Unfortunately, the America's-always-to-blame bozos get all the publicity—and you're giving them more by implying that their moral blindness characterizes the academy as a whole.

You report 146 antiwar rallies after September 11—that's about 4 percent of American schools. Where rallies occurred, they were small—attended by 5 percent of students or less. Roughly one student in 500 went to a rally; the figure for professors is similar.

Even at elite institutions, only a small minority spouts the views you highlight. A collection of revolting anecdotes does not make a trend. People in the academy need to hear your moral message, if only to reinforce their own views. Why obscure the message by packaging it with unfair generalizations?

But thank you for a good read. *Alfred Kelly*
Hamilton College

Kay S. Hymowitz & Harry Stein respond:

Mr. Kelly presents a wonderfully optimistic vision of U.S. campuses, and it would be terrific to think he's right. Alas, though we certainly agree on some of the particulars, the evidence suggests otherwise.

The blame-America bozos do indeed tend to get the lion's share of publicity; the media does focus on "elite" institutions to the exclusion of most others; and, yes—even at those places—only a modest percentage of students are active America-bashers.

This has always been so. It was certainly the case during Vietnam. It is also entirely beside the point we were seeking to make. Our focus was the pernicious effects of the intellectual fad of multiculturalism—long embraced as gospel on virtually *every* American campus, large and small—and how it has promoted a morally flaccid ethic of nonjudgment.

The September 11 atrocity, precisely because it was so grotesque an assault on civilized and specifically Western values,

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provided an opportunity to see just how much that idea has taken hold. The astonishing thing was not that the vast majority of students and faculty reacted with both anger and surging patriotism, but that some did not so react. Nor is it meaningless that so high a proportion of the protests occurred at "prestige" institutions. Like it or not—and we certainly don't—those schools set trends, as they did during Vietnam.

We searched far and wide for college and university administrators who issued forthright statements excoriating the attacks as acts of unequivocal evil. What we found, overwhelmingly, were expressions of concern that September 11 might lead to assaults on "diversity."

Kelly wants us to celebrate a new campus attitude. To the extent that it has occurred, it comes as gratifying news indeed. But there remains an underlying sickness, and we have yet to see evidence of the patient's recovery.

Rumors of Wars

To the editor:

In her essay "Keeping New York Safe from Terrorists" [Autumn 2001], Heather Mac Donald asserts in passing that just after the September 11 attacks "celebrations" took place in Paterson, New Jersey, presumably in the city's Muslim community. This is the first mention I have seen of the "Paterson celebrations" in print, but rumors have circulated in New Jersey for months. People I know (including a New Jersey Muslim) insist they took place; others (including a local news reporter) insist that they did not. Unfortunately, none of them were in Paterson at the time.

One such "celebration" rumor, involving a doughnut shop in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, was demonstrated to be false after local police, following up on a complaint, checked the store's security video.

Mac Donald speaks of the celebrations as though they were fact. I'd be interested to know what evidence exists for their occurrence. And why has the mainstream media allowed rumors to circulate for months without saying a word? *Irfan Khawaja*
Ewing, NJ

Heather Mac Donald responds:

I based my statement on reports circulating at the time I wrote the article. If there has been no substantiation of those reports, I was in error.

Shari'a for Thee, But Not for Me

To the editor:

I read with pleasure Daniel Pipes's "Fighting Militant Islam, Without Bias" [Autumn 2001]. In the late seventies and early eighties, a wave of Egyptians emigrated to Saudi Arabia to work in its booming oil-driven economy. I was among them, and worked for a Saudi prince who fully represents the Muslim elite's double personality. Every first Friday of the Islamic month, I attended the court over which this prince presided, punishing people for crimes like drinking alcohol. He himself was drunk every night. In all my life, I haven't seen as much Scotch whisky as I saw in this prince's palace. *George El Masri*
Via e-mail

Will Islamists Ever Dare to Know?

To the editor:

Farrukh Dhondy's otherwise insightful and cautionary article about the dangers of Islamist ideology in Britain is marred by the author's plea for the emergence of an Islamic Martin Luther.

Enraged by the failure of European Jewry to convert to his new gospel, Luther became a bitter polemicist and advocate of violence, preaching an anti-Semitism of word and deed that rivals that of the most dogmatic jihadist today.

What the Islamic world so desperately needs is not a Luther, but an Enlightenment.
Harold Karabell
St. Louis, MO

Farrukh Dhondy responds:

Enlightenments require historically favorable environments and respected enlighteners. The Muslim world lacks the cultural preconditions—economic, intellectual, and legal—for such a secular transformation to take place.

But your point about Luther is well taken. Perhaps what Islam really needs is an *anti*-Luther, who will institute the selling of indulgences as purchase for salvation, a far more enlightened fee than the suicidal spilling of innocent blood.

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Kay S. Hymowitz, a contributing editor of *City Journal*, is the author of *Ready or Not: Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future—And Ours* and a principal contributor to *Modern Sex: Liberation and Its Discontents*.

Heather Mac Donald is a contributing editor of *City Journal*, John M. Olin Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and author of *The Burden of Bad Ideas: How Modern Intellectuals Misshape Our Society*. Her articles have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, and the *New York Times*.

Washington's Birthday, New York, 1927 (oil on canvas) by Guy Carleton Wiggins (1883–1962) Christie's Images/ Bridgeman Art Library

Steven Malanga is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. He was formerly executive editor at *Crain's New York Business*.

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Their Own Talib

September 11 reminded us of the dangers of religious extremism. But John Walker, the young American captured fighting beside the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif, reminds us of the opposite: the risks of open-ended tolerance, absent all conviction.

Before his life took its amazing turn, Walker was a doted-upon son of upscale, anything-goes Marin County, California. At 14, he spent his time listening to hip-hop and surfing the web. As he began what at first looked like typical adolescent soul-searching, his parents stayed lovingly supportive. They sent him to Tamiscal High School, where, the school's website announces, students pursue "self-directed, independent study." They endorsed his growing attraction to Islam, bankrolling his study of the Quran in Yemen and Pakistan. Even after his capture in Afghanistan, Frank Lindh remained the devoted dad: "I don't think John was doing anything wrong."

But no matter how loving, such tolerance is at the heart of their son's fanaticism. Certainly there was no cultural wisdom these adults felt impelled to pass on to him. In school, he could study what he wanted, on his own; he reportedly met with his only teacher but once a week. Likewise, in what one paper calls the "Bay Area's bustling religious bazaar," John could explore Buddhism, his mother's adopted creed, or Native American religion, or Islam.

These good people were not overly worried where their son's spiritual journey took him, because for them beliefs have no intrinsic value or meaning, and the journey is all. As Lindh explained, Islam was as good as his own Catholicism, since "both have strong traditions of scholarship and deep history." What endows belief with meaning, then, is not its content—Jesus, Mohammad, . . . whatever—but the commitment that one brings to it. This explains why Lindh was "proud of John for pursuing an alternative course." An alternative rather than a predictable (i.e., Judeo-Christian) course testifies to your individuality and "passion," a word both parents used to describe their son's spiritual search. In this world, religion is therapy; its value lies not in truths that come to grips with life's tragic mysteries but in its ability to fill the hungry soul with feelings of vitality and well-being.

Is it so surprising that Walker—described as a sensitive boy, doubtless made even more vulnerable by his parents' recent separation and his father's reported homosexual affair—found in this anemic world an unbearable lightness of being and sought its antithesis? In Pakistan, this alternative-school student, who'd probably never had to memorize a single historical date because such passive learning inhibits independent thinking, wanted to learn the entire Quran by heart. He begged to be told how to hold his hands when he prayed, what to eat, what to think. The precise discipline, the certainty so entirely absent from his Bay Area life, filled a void. "In the U.S., I feel alone," he reportedly said in Pakistan. "Here I feel comfortable and at home." His next step into Afghanistan makes perfect sense; his "heart became attached" to the Taliban because they had set up a "pure Islamic state," the polar opposite of the morally vapid Marin County that had left him empty.

Now that Walker appears to have committed a crime so evil that Dante damned its practitioners to hell's lowest circle, Marilyn Walker thinks that her son must have been brainwashed. "When you're young and impressionable, it's easy to be led by charismatic people," she said. Family friends defend him simply on the grounds of his youth.

Both explanations only magnify the problem of Walker's upbringing. It is because his elders left him to define his own moral, spiritual, and intellectual universe that he failed to become an adult who could meet life's demands with moral seriousness and a sense of self. It is because they told him to follow his bliss that he did not become a man who grasped that his decisions would affect others—his family, his neighbors, and his country—and would define him for life. So Walker remains in a nebulous post-adolescent state, too big to be a child, too lite to be an adult.

The cultural predicament that gives rise to such child-adults, a common enough American type today, is precisely why we can't let our sympathies get the better of us—even if we agree with President Bush that Walker is "a poor fellow." Walker's trial and the punishment that will likely follow it will be essential rituals for a country newly conscious of the need to balance its tradition of tolerance and child-centeredness with moral gravity—and with respect for Walker's fellow young Americans who are risking their lives for their country in Afghanistan.

—Kay S. Hymowitz

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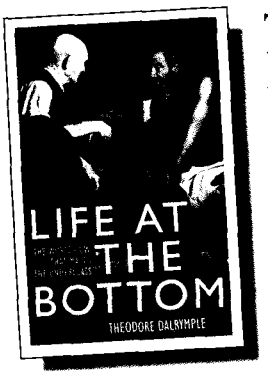


THEODORE DALRYMPLE

Life at the Bottom

The World View That Makes the Underclass

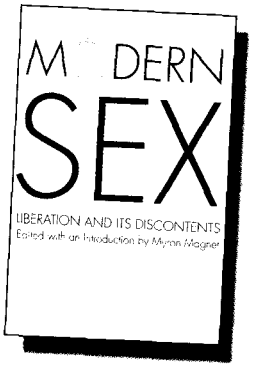
"This devastating account and analysis of underclass life—and the elite ideas which support it—is a classic for our times. . . . fundamental for understanding the world we live in."—THOMAS SOWELL "Drawing upon his harrowing experiences as a physician and psychiatrist in a British slum and nearby prison, Theodore Dalrymple demonstrates that much of the degradation of the underclass . . . can be traced to bad ideas that have trickled down from the intelligentsia."—GEORGE F. WILL "Among the most truthful—and therefore also among the most morally courageous and intellectually rigorous—descriptions anyone has given us of 'life at the bottom.'"—NORMAN PODHORETZ. "He is a writer of genius: lucid, unsentimental, and profoundly honest. This collection demonstrates beyond question that Theodore Dalrymple is one of the great essayists of our age."—DENIS DUTTON

MYRON MAGNET, EDITOR

Modern Sex

Liberation and Its Discontents

The sexual liberation of the 1960s has made us no happier and, if anything, less fulfilled. Why? In remarkable essays from Kay Hymowitz, Wendy Shalit, Roger Scruton, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, and others, *Modern Sex* offers a deep and informative appraisal of how and why the sexual revolution has failed and how we might begin to reconstruct and rehumanize relations between the sexes. New in paperback and hardcover.



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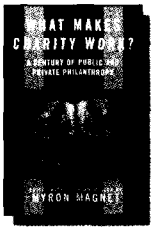
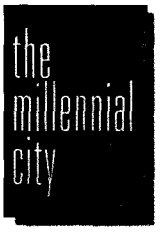
The Burden of Bad Ideas
HEATHER MAC DONALD



What Makes Charity Work?
MYRON MAGNET, EDITOR



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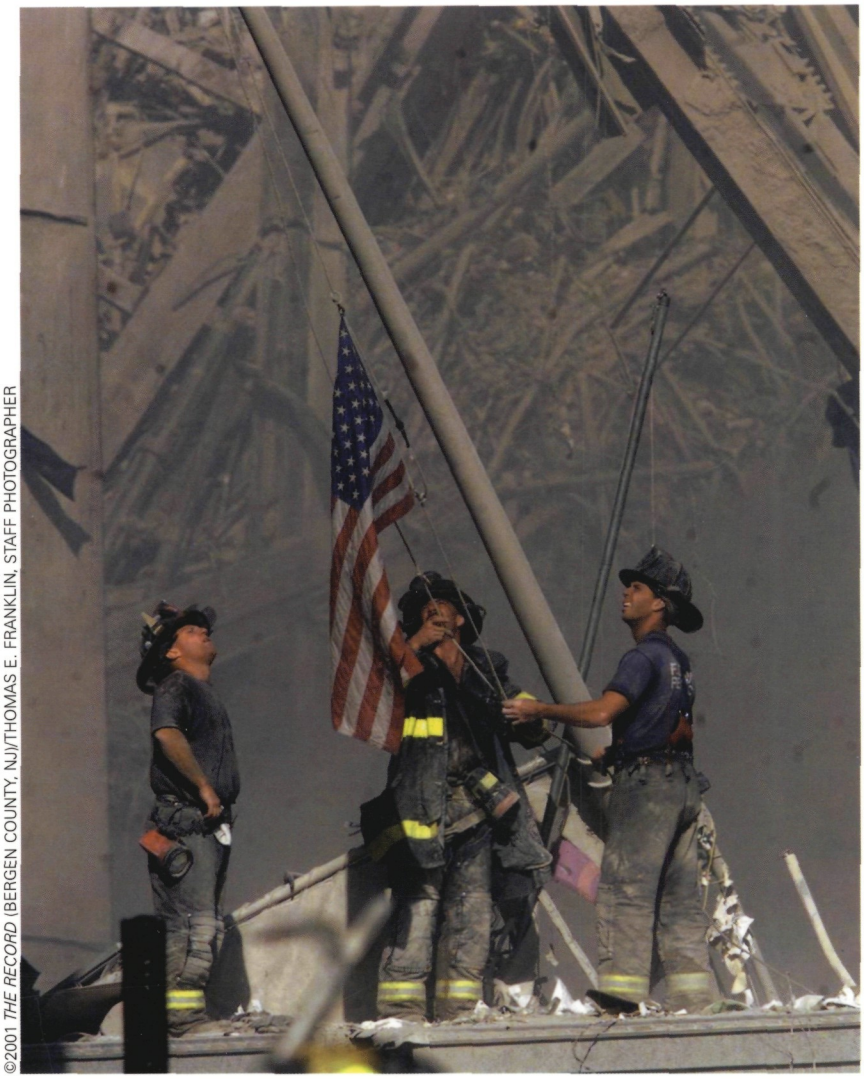

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HONOR OUR HEROES

New York City mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani has established the Twin Towers Fund to assist the families of the members of the uniformed services of the New York City Fire Department and its Emergency Medical Service Command, the New York City Police Department, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and other government offices who were killed or injured in the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001.

Please make your check or money order payable to:
Twin Towers Fund, General Post Office, P.O. Box 26999, New York, NY 10087-6999

Call (877) 870-4278 toll free to donate, or visit their website at http://twintowersfund.vista.com

Wire funds directly: Chase Manhattan Bank (ABA # 021 0000 21) to Account # 134 694 481.

For further information, corporations and foundations may contact
Tamra Lhota, President, NYC Public/Private Initiatives, Inc. (tlhota@cityhall.nyc.gov).

100 percent of proceeds will go to victims' families.

TWIN TOWERS FUN

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